THE SUPERVISORY OFFICER IN ONTARIO

Current Practice and Recommendations for the Future

Principal Investigators
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LYNN WALKER
NANCY WATSON

This research project was funded under contract by the Ministry of Education, Ontario.

This study reflects the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Ministry.

Chris Ward, Minister
Bernard J. Shapiro, Deputy Minister

Ministry
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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes a two-year study of supervisory officers in Ontario, a study with both empirical and policy objectives. The research focuses on what supervisory officers do, what skills they need, how they are prepared and selected, and how they experience the job in terms of satisfaction and effectiveness. Recommendations for improvement address training, certification, selection, and professional development.

A stratified sample of 25 boards and 4 ministry offices was selected for in-depth study, with data gathered through interviews, primarily with supervisory officers, supplemented by analysis of pertinent documents. In school boards, five role types were identified: directors, business supervisory officers, central supervisory officers, area superintendents and combined roles. In the ministry, the role types were: regional office, Mowat Block (provincial office) general supervisory, and Mowat Block specific assignment. A matrix of action and content shows supervisory officer tasks falling into various action groupings (such as review/evaluation, problem solving, coordination) and content groupings (such as curriculum, personnel, finance). Interacting with others to accomplish tasks is vital to the role. In spite of contextual differences among the roles in different locations and different types of board, the core actions and skills are relatively constant. Both "process skills" and "personal qualities" are necessary, and our study attempted to identify the qualities essential to effective leadership.

There is no systematic training for the supervisory officer role, and most incumbents have had relatively narrow experience, often all within one board. Professional development opportunities are severely limited.

The greatly increased numbers of candidates and the increased complexity of the supervisory officer role lead the researchers to conclude that the current certification process is no longer appropriate to the task of selecting Ontario's educational leaders. The study goes on to conclude that the roles of supervisory officers are neither as satisfying nor as effective as they could be. Major changes in the preparation, experience, working conditions and professional development are needed if supervisory officers are to provide leadership for increasingly complex educational systems.

In the final chapter, the researchers propose reforms to current practice. Proposals are aimed at combatting the problems in the current system by providing a variety of experiences and the opportunity to work with experienced leaders. Recommendations are directed at governance, certification (licensing), preparation and professional development. Proposals include the establishment of a new independent body to develop and coordinate licensing, preparation, internship and professional development for supervisory officers in Ontario. Licensing would be based on a skill-based preparation program, closely linked to the requirements of the role. The supervisory officer license, awarded initially on a probationary basis to newly appointed supervisory officers, would be made permanent following an internship program, to be completed during the first three years in a supervisory officer position. Internship would require twenty days per year of focused professional development experiences, at least some outside the field of education.

Preface

From its inception, the study was understood to have both empirical and policy objectives. The researchers were to gather information and draw conclusions about what supervisory officers do, what skills they need, and how they are prepared and selected. The research was not to be restricted to empirical investigation, since we were to develop recommendations governing training, certification, selection, and professional development.

The report is organized into four major sections:

- **Introductory chapters:** Here we describe the context of our inquiry, outline the methodology used, and summarize the relevant literature pertaining to the issues. We go on to provide a structural analysis based on all boards in the province, and give a description of our sample of supervisory officers in the study.
- **Board Supervisory Officers:** In this section we present data concerning supervisory officers in boards; what they do, how the roles are influenced by the board context and how incumbents perceive their roles in terms of satisfaction and stress. We go on to deal with selection and training, looking first at the present situation, then discussing some of the problems inherent in the status quo. The most striking feature is that training is least likely to be provided in the areas that are most crucial for performance of the supervisory officer role. A discussion of the skill needed to be effective is followed by suggestions of appropriate ways in which such skills might be acquired. The section concludes with a review and discussion of the current certification process.
- **Ministry Supervisory Officers:** This section looks at the role of supervisory officer in the Ministry of Education. The description parallels that presented earlier for board supervisory officers.
- **Recommendations**: In this final section we present our suggestions for reform. The recommendations flow from a conception of the role of supervisory officer as a leader, and are designed to provide the variety and intensity of preparation and continuous professional development essential for managing the complex educational system of the 1990s.

In general, our conclusion is that the roles of supervisory officers are not as satisfying and as effective as they could be. A greater variety of career experiences and opportunities for more focused skill development are necessary for developing the capacity to cope with the complexities and uncertainties facing contemporary school systems. We believe that our recommendations, if implemented, will strengthen the role of supervisory officer, and lead to greater effectiveness on the part of educational leaders. Major changes are required if supervisory officers are to provide the leadership necessary for the increasingly complex educational systems of the 1980s and 1990s.

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We conducted a large-scale two-year study which could not have been accomplished without full cooperation at all levels of the system. We particularly thank the Consultative Group members (listed below) for the multiple forms of cooperation they displayed throughout the project. The Consultative Group helped with specifying the goals and design of the study, worked in defining important issues, helped obtain full cooperation from boards and other groups, reviewed in detail the draft of the final report and made a number of significant suggestions which clarified and strengthened the final report. We also thank Kenn Johnson, our official liaison from the Ministry of Education and a member of the Consultative Group, for his help throughout the project.

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There are other individuals who undertook special assignments for us. Matthew Miles conducted workshops with the research team on three occasions, taking us through the pitfalls and solutions of designing and carrying out qualitative data analysis. His expertise and teaching effectiveness was much appreciated. Stephen Anderson's contributions to Chapter 7 (Selection and training) were substantial, in that he analysed the data and wrote the first draft. Joyce Scane and Norm Rowan helped by conducting a number of interviews at critical stages of the project. Frank Quinlan provided substantial editing assistance as the report was produced, and greatly improved the clarity of the presentation. JoAnne Squires orchestrated the design and computer production of the final report, no easy task with six writers in three different cities. Terry Massameno provided helpful formatting and editing suggestions.

None of the above bear any responsibility for the final recommendations, but we sincerely thank them all for their substantial contributions to making the project both more enjoyable and more productive.

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PART A: INTRODUCTORY CHAPTERS

Chapter 1
The Problem and Background

1.1. The problem: Context of study

This report describes a large-scale study carried out by a three-university team over a period of two years. It represents an attempt to examine fully the role of the supervisory officer in Ontario, primarily as the role is seen by the officers themselves. The study grew out of continued concern with the role as it has developed since the amalgamation of school boards into large units in 1969. Prior to this date, most supervisory officers had been employed by the Ministry of Education, but now most are directly employed by local boards of education. Of the 958 supervisory officers in Ontario in 1986, 811 were employed by boards and only 147 by the ministry.[1] Although there is no indication that people have been dissatisfied with how the role has developed, certain aspects of it -- political concerns, for instance -- were not fully anticipated. Further, it has been suggested (for example, by the ministry paper *The Way Ahead*) that the description in the Education Act of the duties of supervisory officers fails to capture what the officers actually do or the responsibilities they assume. For years, questions have been raised about the relationship between the preparation received by educational administrators and the tasks involved in the job. Are the current selection and training methods appropriate? If not, what system might be preferable?

1.2. Aims of study

The present study has both empirical and policy aims. On the empirical side, the study seeks to increase and clarify knowledge about the supervisory officer role in Ontario (both in boards and the Ministry of Education), to determine the range of tasks performed and any commonalities among them, and finally, to delineate the factors that influence the role. On the policy side, the aim is to formulate recommendations to improve selection, certification, and training of supervisory officers. More specifically, the researchers were to determine the need for changes in existing policy and legislation with respect to the statutory duties, the certification, and the preparation of supervisory officers in Ontario.

1.3. Current legislation in Ontario

The Education Act sets out the conditions under which boards must hire supervisory officers, defines the duties to be performed, and states the qualifications and certification requirements (Ontario is the only province requiring provincial certification for its supervisory officers).

In Chapter 129, Section 253, Paragraph 2, the Act summarizes the duties of a chief executive officer to a school board as follows: "... within policies established by the board ... [he must] ... develop and

[1] Data from K. Johnson, Ministry of Education, March, 1987

ma ıtain an effective organization and the programs required to implement such policies." Boards are required to hire a chief executive officer when enrolment reaches two thousand pupils. Other than this, boards are required to hire such supervisory officers as they deem necessary, subject to ministerial approval. The duties to be performed by the body of supervisory officers in any jurisdiction are listed in Section 256 as follows:

a) to bring about improvement in the quality of education by assisting teachers in their practice;

b) to assist and cooperate with boards to the end that the schools may best serve the needs of the pupils;

c) to visit schools and classrooms as the Minister may direct and, where the supervisory officer has been appointed by a board, as the board may direct;

d) to prepare a report of a visit to a school or classroom when required by the Minister and, where the supervisory officer has been appointed by a board, when required by the board and to give to a teacher referred to in any such report a copy of the portion of the report that refers to the teacher;

e) to ensure that the schools under his jurisdiction are conducted in accordance with this Act and the regulations;

f) to make a general annual report as to the performance of his duties and the condition of the schools in his area of jurisdiction when required by the Minister, and where the supervisory officer has been appointed by a board, when required by the board;

g) to report to the appropriate medical officer of health any case in which the school buildings or premises are found to be in an unsanitary condition;

h) to furnish the Minister with any information respecting any school in his or her area of jurisdiction whenever required to do so;

i) to supervise the business functions of the board; and

j) to supervise the use and maintenance of the buildings and property of the board.

Aside from being a strange combination of specific and general tasks, this list, as admitted by the Ministry of Education in its white paper, *The Way Ahead*, "... do[es] not encompass the range of actual tasks performed by supervisory officers in most school systems." In practice, it is up to each board to designate specific titles and areas of re ponsibility of the officers it employs. The outcome is a situation in which there is perceived to be great diversity in the roles of supervisory officers from one board to the next across the province.

The Act sets o t, in Regulation 276, the requirements for certification as a supervisory officer. Last revised in 1984, they are as follows:

- seven years' teaching experience, two of which must be in Ontario;
- the degree of Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science from an Ontario university (or one considered equivalent by the Minister),
- an Ontario Teacher's Certificate,
- a master's degree in education or a degree that the Minister considers equivalent, and
- one of the following:
  - Principal's Certificate
  - Program Supervision and Assessment qualifications
  - at least two years of successful experience in subject and program supervision and coordination under section 18 of Regulation 262 (1980)
  - at least two years of successiul experience as an education officer employed by the ministry.

For candidates wishing to to write the examinations for certification as a business supervisory officer (not eligible to hold the position of director of education), the requirements are different. Because of difficulties in developing a pool of qualified candidates, the regulations were changed during the course of the research (Policy/program Memorandum No. 35, 1986) so that candidates must now:

- have completed the school board management program (as outlined in the regulations, and including courses in finance and administration relating to school board operation .
- have seven years of experience in business administration;
- hold an acceptable university degree or be an architect, certified general accountant, certified management accountant, chartered accountant, or professional engineer.

In addition to being unique in requiring provincial certification for its supervisory officers, Ontario alone requires successful completion of a set of examinations. The examinations, with both written and oral components, are based on:

- the Acts administered by the Minister and the regulations thereunder;
- the curriculum guidelines and other reference material pertaining to elementary and secondary education in Ontario; and
- theories and practices of supervision, administration, and business organization that may be applicable to the effective operation of a school system.

The supervisory officer examinations have two questions specifically for business candidates, one a general question of business administration in education, the other a specific question on school finance.

Table 1-1 provides a brief comparison among the requirements for supervisory officers or superintendents in the provinces of Canada. It can be seen that Ontario has the most stringent and explicit requirements.

Table 1-1: Certification, Preparation and Experience Requirements for Supervisory Officers by Province[a]

	Nfld	N.S.	N.B.	P.E.I.	P.Q.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.
1. Certificate	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
2. Years University	6	-	6	-	6	-	-	5	5	6
3. Degree	M.Ed.	-	M.Ed.	-	Master's	M.Ed.	-	B.Ed.	B.Ed.	B.Ed.
4. Admin. Courses	M.Ed[b]	-	M.Ed.	-	-	M.Ed.	-	8	8	-
5. Teaching Exp.	3	-	5	-	5	7	-	2	5	
6. Admin. Exp.	2	-	5	-	5	-	-	2	-	4
7. Courses[c]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Notes: [a] Source: Miklos and Chapman (1986)

[b] Only those administration courses specified by a particular M.Ed. program are required

[c] Non-credit courses which must be completed in order to qualify for certificate

1.4. Historical perspective

1.4.1. Development of Ontario system

The history of educational administration in Ontario goes back to the time of those early leaders, John Strachan and Egerton Ryerson. In 1816 the Legislature allocated funds for the establishment of "common schools" in communities with at least twenty students, and three persons willing serve as trustees. These trustees served as school administrators, with the responsibility of hiring a teacher, and submitting an annual report to the legislature.

McCordic (1984), in his history of educational supervision in Ontario, states:

> ...while local lay initiative was well-intended and enthusiastic, it could not by itself generate an adequate network of schools. Also required were: first, stronger leadership and direction from a provincial office of education; second, a cadre of professionals deployed throughout the province to see to it that schools were opened as required and that each fulfilled its function as efficiently and effectively as possible (p. 3).

In the 1830s a series of attempts was made to improve education. Among the efforts were reports recommending the appointment of paid officials to superintend the schools (as well as higher salaries and a formal teacher training program). Following the 1843 "Act for the Establishment and Maintenance of Common Schools in Upper Canada", the first hierarchy of paid supervisory officials was established. The Assistant Superintendent of Education (in fact the chief educational officer) reported to the Superintendent of Education, who was a member of the Legislature. Each county in turn was to appoint a superintendent, "to distribute funds, to examine and certify teachers, to visit schools and to assess the quality of instruction" (McCordic, 1984, p. 5). The final step down the hierarchy was a local superintendent in each town, to perform the same duties, reporting to the county superintendent.

In 1844, Ryerson was appointed Assistant Superintendent (he advanced to Superintendent two years later), and, as related by McCordic (1984), took immediate action:

> As a condition of his appointment, Ryerson won approval for a grand tour of educational systems in the United States and Europe. He returned from this year-long project with a deep sense of mission, eager to translate what he had seen and what he personally believed into an efficient system of education for Upper Canada. He was convinced, for instance, that the laissez-faire approach that depended on local initiative was inadequate. If good schools were to materialize there needed to be a strong central presence that would impose on communities a workable plan, prescribe textbooks and ensure a supply of capable and well-trained teachers. At all levels he saw the need for competent professionals to manage and to evaluate the work, school by school. As to the program itself, he urged that it be universal, practical and anchored in a bedrock of religion and morality (p. 5).

As early as this, a hallmark of Ontario education had emerged, in that the provincial government began to take a strong role in determining all aspects of education, including who would be qualified to supervise education.

The 1870s saw growth in numbers, and changes in the organization of education in Ontario. In 1871, the office of local superintendent was abolished and that of "county inspector" was created, and for the first time, examinations became necessary for supervisory positions. The "Council of Public Instruction" was established to determine the qualifications of the new Inspectors of Schools, at both the elementary and high school levels, and a set of examinations was developed to select qualified candidates for the elementary schools. Secondary school inspectors needed only the High School Principal's Certificate, which required no examination. The difference in qualifications presumably stemmed from the fact that

secondary school staff had a university degree. From the beginning, supervision and inspection of the two levels of schools was kept distinct; the notion of the K-13 continuum was far in the future.

From 1871, local areas were required to appoint Inspectors of Public Schools. While this generally was done by the County Councils, in the cities the appointment was made by the local trustees. As McCordic points out, several dynamic and forward-looking men emerged through the years, each with his own distinctive approach: Hughes and MacMurchy in Toronto, Glashan and Putman in Ottawa, Boyle and Wheable in London.

In the separate school system, supervision was handled both by the church (religious instruction), and by Department of Education Inspectors (secular instruction). Most boards did not appoint local supervisory officers until the amalgamation of 1969.

In 1876, the central power was consolidated when the Council of Education was made the Department of Education. As Canadian society changed and became more industrialized, the education system changed as well, developing through the late 1800s and early 1900s. Enrolment increased, courses were added, and teacher qualifications improved. In a parallel development, the qualifications of Inspectors were formalized and steadily increased (Boich & Farquhar, in press). By 1930, Inspectors had to be university graduates who held Permanent First Class teaching certificates, had adequate teaching experience and had passed a set of comprehensive examinations. The requirement of university graduation seems not to have always been enforced, but it nonetheless meant that inspectors were unlikely to be drawn from the elementary system.

The steady pace of change was maintained through until the 1960s. The Department of Education produced Courses of Study, while the inspectorial staff were responsible for ensuring these were followed. Inspectors were to give leadership to the staff, trustees and students of the many small boards in Ontario. In the 1960s however, the pace of change accelerated, reflecting the important social and educational changes which had taken place in Ontario (and indeed across Canada) in the post-war era. Fleming's (1986) description of the situation in British Columbia applies equally well to Ontario, when he points to:

> ...rising demands by various constituencies for greater school board autonomy, the actions of powerful special interest groups in education, and general politicalization and pluralization of school policy making in the years after mid-century. Widespread public and professional discussion....about such matters as administrative decentralization, accountability, and broadening the school's mandate also gave further impetus to the drive for locally-appointed school leaders (p. 2).

As the 1960s drew to a close, the rapid pace of change culminated in the shift of supervisory responsibility from the ministry to the new local authorities, the county boards. At the same time, the number of boards in Ontario was reduced from nearly four thousand to under two hundred.

In 1971, Ontario Regulation 517/71 established the term "Supervisory Officer", a term which soon replaced the old term "inspector". In 1974, changes to the Education Act specified details of the examinations and prerequisites for the certification of supervisory officers, and also set out the conditions in which individuals could be "deemed to hold a Supervisory Officer's Certificate" (a "grandfather" clause).

1.4.2. Previous efforts to reform legislation

As has been noted, 1969 marked the beginning of a new era in supervision and organization of schooling in Ontario. The number of supervisory officers employed by boards rose sharply to over 600 (Boich & Farquhar, in press) immediately following the shift. For the first time, supervision became more

a board than a ministry responsibility. As Boich and Farquhar point out, "this dramatic change altered priorities, perspectives and problems to be solved..." (p. 16). For the supervisory officers, local employment meant owing allegiance to the boards who hired them and to their local communities rather than to the provincial ministry.

Questions soon arose as to the appropriateness of the legislated requirements for qualifications, certification and preparation. In the early 1970s, the Deputy Minister of Education suggested that the certification requirement could perhaps be abolished, giving boards a freer hand in hiring supervisory officers. A committee was established to examine the question of certification , and on the basis of its conclusions, to draft new legislation. Some alterations were made in 1974, but since no radical changes resulted from the redrafting, interest de.eloped for a more in-depth study of the role of supervisory officer. Throughout much of the next decade, both the Ontario Association of Education Administrative Officials (OAEAO) and the Ministry of Education were involved in research and policy studies. Partlow, Turner, and Cummins (1980) carried out a study "designed to contribute to the continuing development of a rational and consistent basis for the training, certification and selection of supervisory officers in Ontario" (p. ix). Data were collected through questionnaire distribution, interviews, and structured observation of meetings. The authors identified "qualities" and "competencies" seen as important for supervisory officers. The four most important qualities were integrity/honesty, positive human relations attitudes, common sense, and leadership, while the four most important competencies were communication skills, human relations skills, leadership skills, and evaluation skills (p. x). Respondents to the study felt an internship program would provide effective preparation for the role of supervisory officer. The Partlow *et al.* study did not make specific recommendations, but provided data that could inform possible legislative reform.

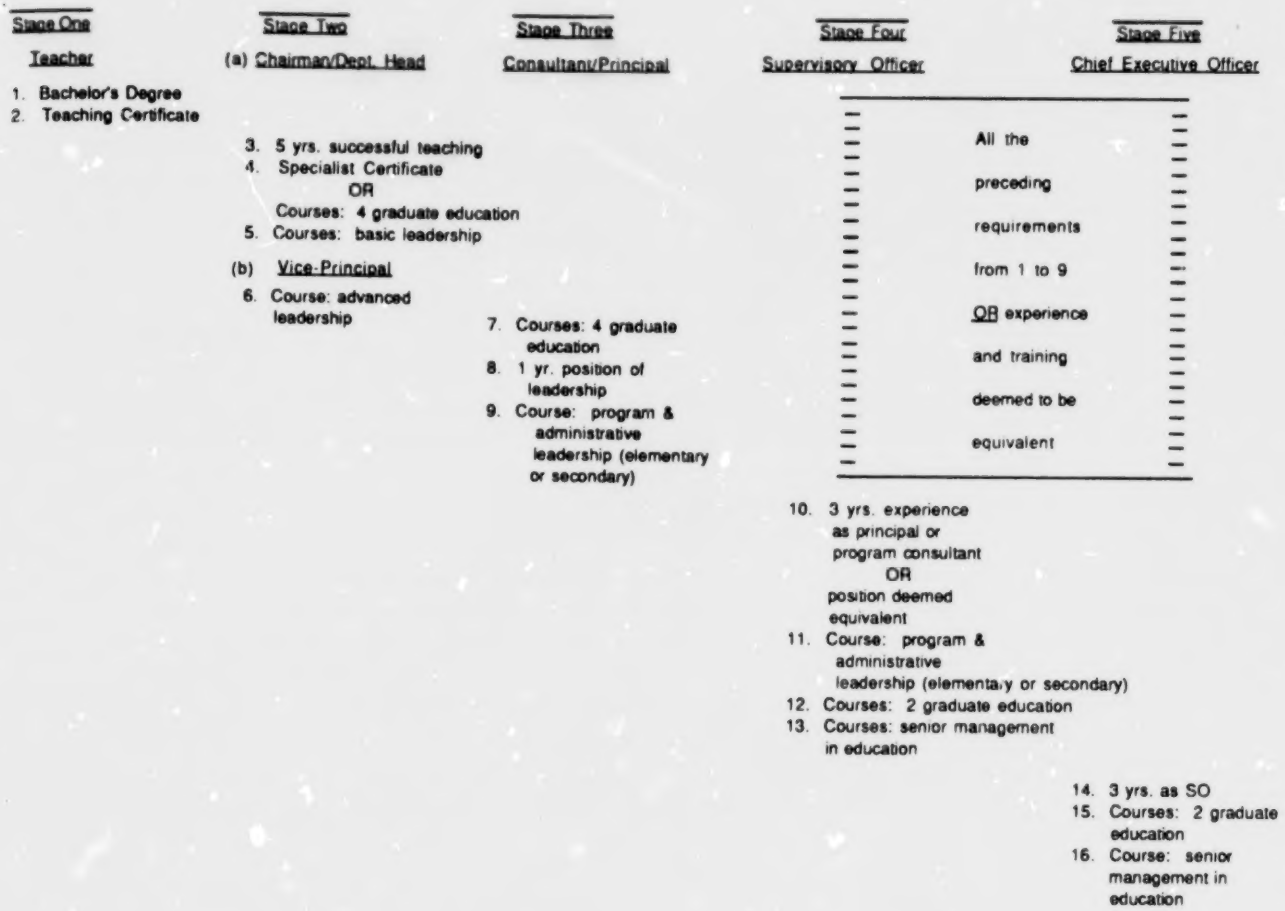
About the same time, other work was in progress. McLeod and Brophy carried out a major investigation of the role of chief executive officer; its results were described in an unpublished report (McLeod, 1980) and an article (McLeod, 1984). Auster and McCordic (1980) undertook another study of the supervisory officer, under the auspices of OAEAO. McCordic was writing a history of the supervisory officer in Ontario, although it was not published until 1984 (McCordic, 1984).

Thomas (1982) then undertook a review of the training and certification of both principals and supervisory officers. He made extensive proposals for reform, based on the premise that leadership development in the education system should involve both formal training elements and relevant leadership experience. The main recommendations of his report, *A Perspective for the Future*, were two:

- that there be established in legislation a set of new requirements for certification prerequisites for appointment to a position of responsibility beyond that of a classroom teacher, and that these new requirements be developed in the context of a five-stage career plan, as outlined in Figure 1-1 below;
- that there be established a certification council with membership representative of those agencies with a role in the process of preparing persons to fill positions of responsibility beyond that of a classroom teacher.

The report was widely distributed throughout the province, with an invitation to respond to the proposals. In the response, serious concerns were raised, particularly with regard to the five-stage career plan. Respondents did not reject the idea of a staged career plan, but saw this particular proposal as too complex and inflexible. Many small boards would find it difficult to provide such career-path experience. Some respondents, particularly principals' groups, questioned the equivalency of experience as principals and curriculum consultants. Others, such as OAEAO, felt that a mandated plan should be restricted to certification of principals and supervisory officers, not department heads and chairmen. The Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) saw the proposal as inappropriate for the business

Figure 1-1: Five-Stage Career-Development Plan[2]


Stage One
Teacher
1. Bachelor's Degree
2. Teaching Certificate
Stage Two
(a) Chairman/Dept. Head
3. 5 yrs. successful teaching
4. Specialist Certificate
OR
Courses: 4 graduate education
5. Courses: basic leadership
(b) Vice-Principal
6. Course: advanced leadership
Stage Three
Consultant/Principal
7. Courses: 4 graduate education
8. 1 yr. position of leadership
9. Course: program & administrative leadership (elementary or secondary)
Stage Four
Supervisory Officer
All the preceding requirements from 1 to 9 OR experience and training deemed to be equivalent
10. 3 yrs. experience as principal or program consultant
OR
position deemed equivalent
11. Course: program & administrative leadership (elementary or secondary)
12. Courses: 2 graduate education
13. Courses: senior management in education
Stage Five
Chief Executive Officer
14. 3 yrs. as SO
15. Courses: 2 graduate education
16. Course: senior management in education

official. Most individuals and associations who responded thought that the "lock-step" nature of the proposed plan was too rigid, and would therefore not meet the needs of Ontario school boards. It was suggested that more alternatives ought to be considered.

The ministry produced a policy document entitled *The Way Ahead*, analysing the reaction to the Thomas report, setting forth some policy recommendations, and indicating that some issues remained unresolved. Based on the document, it would appear that such "unresolved issues" are as follows:

- The duties of supervisory officers as set out in legislation need to be reviewed, since the statutory duties do not satisfactorily describe the managerial and policy-advisory roles now assumed by supervisory officers employed by boards.
- The ministry wants to know how best to ensure that supervisory officers are familiar with school law, ministry policies, and curriculum requirements, in order "to ensure that the schools are conducted in accordance with this Act and the regulations" (Section 256(1)(e) of the Education Act).
- There is a question as to how supervisory officers can best maintain an awareness of current educational issues.

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[2]Source: The Way Ahead, (1984) p. 77

- The appropriate qualifications for business officials need to be reviewed. This task was to be done through a separate work group.

These issues appear similar to those that originally prompted the round of studies just described. Why did these studies not produce the reform that so many felt was necessary? In addition to strong pressures for change, there was in Ontario an equally strong pressure to retain the status quo. Further, even within the constituencies who perceived a need for change, views differed about what kinds of changes were required. Some of the solutions proposed turned out to be politically unacceptable to large segments of the educational community. The problem remained: how to decide on (and then implement) appropriate changes in the selection, certification, and preparation of supervisory officers.

In 1985, the Ministry of Education awarded the three research contracts culminating in this report. Once more, the focus was to be the role of the supervisory officer in Ontario, with attention being given to the "unresolved issues" identified in *The Way Ahead*.

1.4.3. The current study in relation to previous work

What makes the current study different? How can this report result in reform when so many other reports have been shelved? The following factors offer hope that the present research will not meet the same fate:

1. This study has a deeper research base within Ontario's educational community. It is an empirical look at the supervisory officer role through use of a carefully selected sample. A large number of supervisory officers, representative of those throughout the province, were part of the research. The empirical data will update and expand information from the previous studies.

2. There is a continuing urge for action, and a higher degree of commitment to any necessary change. Perhaps the earlier work contributed to a new climate of receptiveness to needed reform.

3. A Consultative Group, involving educators, school board officials and representatives from the various education client groups, was appointed to "to consult with and advise, according to need, the Ministry of Education supervisory officials responsible for the supervisory officer research project during the term of the contract" (quoted from the "Terms of Reference of the Consultative Group"). Advice offered was to be viewed as personal and professional, rather than necessarily representative of the positions of the constituent groups or associations. The costs of the group were borne jointly by the ministry and by OAEAO, an indication of the strong commitment to the study. Members of the group, in offering guidance throughout the study, have ensured that views and concerns of all those affected will be heard by the researchers. The Consultative Group also contributed to a high profile for the research in the province, helping to create a receptive climate for its conclusions and recommendations.

4. The two years since the beginning of the research have not produced any resolution of the uncertainties surrounding the role of supervisory officer. On the contrary, political developments such as Bill 30 and Bill 75 have had profound effects on the work of supervisory officers, contributing to further confusion about the role of administrators in the formulation and implementation of educational policy. The issues are even more pressing than they were in 1985.

Chapter 2
Design and Method

2.1. Introduction

Although the supervisory officer research was conducted through three separate contracts, the research teams collaborated on all aspects of the study: conceptualization, data collection, data analysis, and development of policy recommendations. For this reason, no attempt is made to identify portions of the research as the specific responsibility of one particular research team.

Previous attempts to change the certification/selection/preparation process for supervisory officers have often foundered because they failed to meet the criterion of acceptability to the educational community, particularly the parts of it directly affected by the proposed changes. To ensure the continuing involvement and input on the part of supervisory officers themselves, and representatives of such directly affected groups as teachers' federations and trustees, a consultative group was set up. Its members are listed in the *Acknowledgements*. The group was vital to the communication and consultative process of the study, and its knowledge and suggestions proved invaluable. The research teams appreciated the active support the group provided throughout the study.

2.2. Design of study

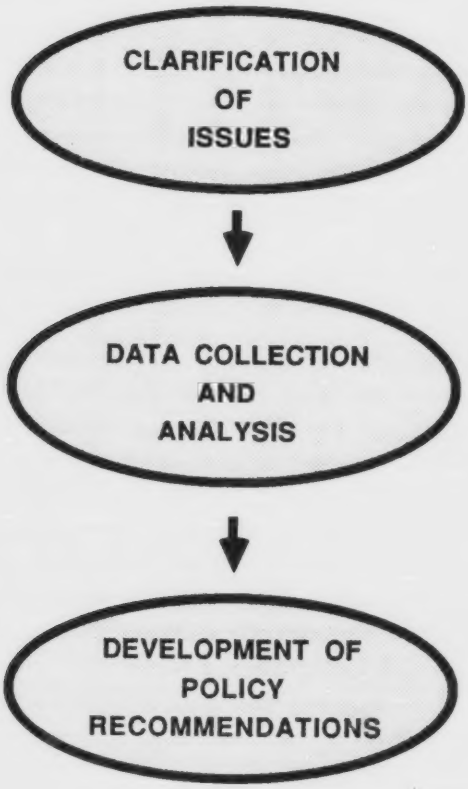
2.2.1. Overview

Figure 2-1 gives an overview of the three phases of the study. The first phase, "Clarification of issues", involves consideration of initial policy questions, as well as the development of a conceptual framework and a set of research questions. The second phase, "Data collection and analysis", leads in turn to the "Development of policy recommendations". The recommendations are thus both grounded in empirical findings and informed by the conceptual framework.

2.2.2. Policy questions

The starting point for the study was a set of formal contractual questions to which the principal investigators were to provide answers (see Appendix A - Contract Questions). These questions dealt with empirical issues (for instance, "what functions in Ontario school boards and in the Ministry of Education do supervisory officers contribute to?"), and also with normative or policy-oriented issues (for instance, "what changes are needed in the existing system of preparation, certification, and maintenance of professionalism?"). Those dealing with policy issues are key to the direction of the study, in that they define the nature and scope of the problems and the kind of recommendations that may be appropriate. The main policy issues covered in the contract questions can be expressed as follows:

Figure 2-1: Three Phases of Study



- What kinds of tasks do supervisory officers face on the job? What skills do they need to be effective?
- How well does the current system of preparation and certification of supervisory officers work in the context of actual Ontario practice?
- What alternative systems of selection, training, and certification might be appropriate? What would be appropriate roles of various institutions and organizations?

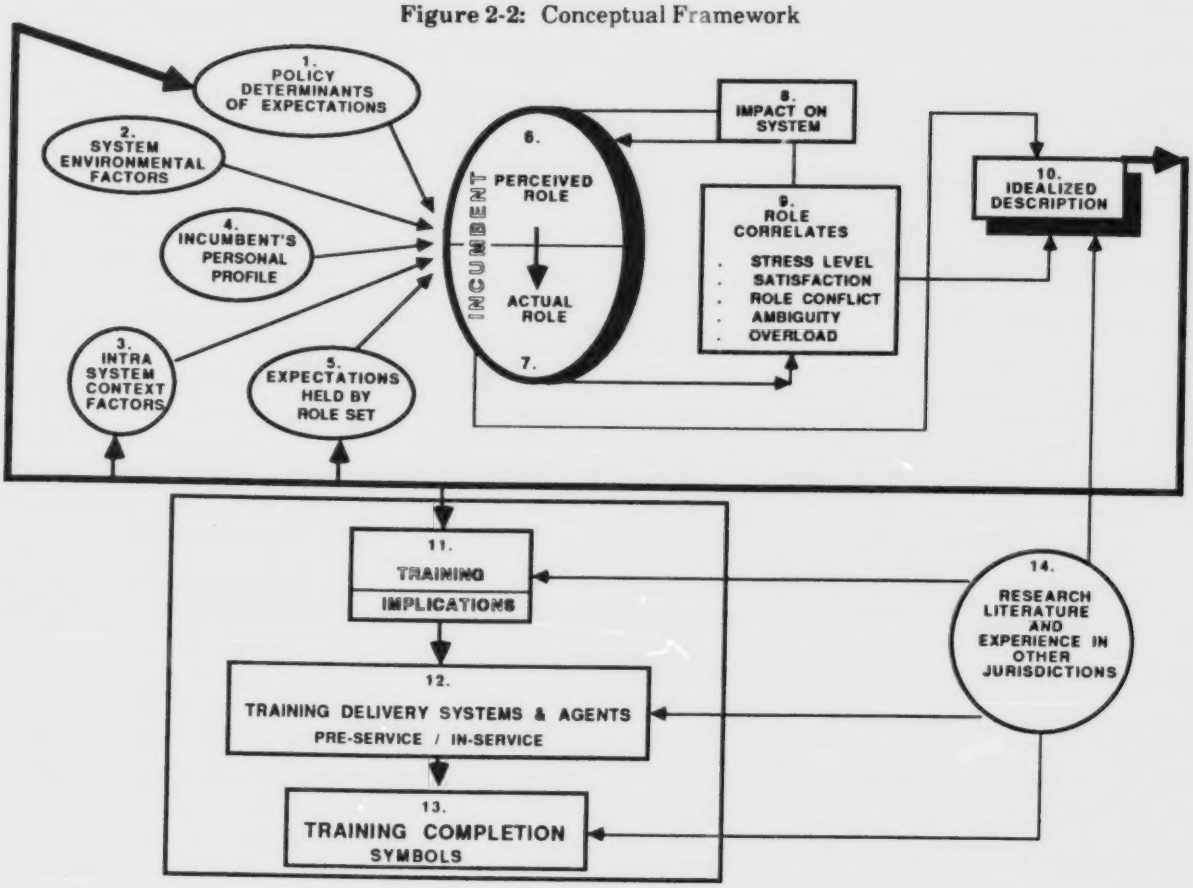
2.2.3. Conceptual framework

The policy questions discussed above served as the starting point for development of a conceptual framework depicting the methodology of the study and the integration of its various elements. This framework is shown in Figure 2-2.

Following are explanations of each of the numbered components in Figure 2-2:

1. *Policy determinants of expectations*: This category includes factors such as legislative provisions, formal board or ministry policy statements, contractual obligations, and so on.
2. *System environment factors*: These factors describe the environment of the school system, and are thus external to the system. They include items such as the rural or urban nature of the community, the population mix (i.e., the degree of multiculturalism, the language mix), the degree of political activity generated by school affairs, the relationship with the media.
3. *Intra-system context factors*: Factors considered in this category include the political character of the board (consensual or factionalized, stable or changing membership); the enrolment

Figure 2-2: Conceptual Framework



profile (growing, stable or declining); public or separate board; the administrative structure type; policies impinging upon supervisory officers' role (affirmative action policies, nature of the collective agreement, evaluation policies, leadership development); the board's operating style (number of committees, task forces, decision-making strategies); selection processes for supervisory officers in the board; other expectations the board has concerning its supervisory officers. In the case of ministry supervisory officers, similar factors relating to the ministry are considered.

4. *Incumbent's personal profile*: Information collected includes age, sex, educational background, experience, appointment from within or outside the system, professional development activities.

5. *Expectations held by role set*: The expectations held for supervisory roles within the system are identified by interviewing members of the role set. Role set members interviewed are the chairman of the board, and chairmen of the principals' associations. The director serves as a member of the role set for other supervisory officers.

6. *Incumbent's perception of role*: The incumbents are interviewed to find out what they think the nature of their roles is and what they believe to be the priorities. Data are collected concerning the incumbent's attitudes toward professional development and desirable changes.

7. *Incumbent's actual role*: An observational component was originally planned for the study, in which supervisory officers would be observed for two or three days. The observation was not carried out, for reasons outlined later in this chapter

8. *Impact on system*: This variable refers to the effect supervisory officers have, either on the school system or the ministry.

9. *Role correlates*: Items under this grouping include factors associated with the incumbent's role performance. These include items such as job satisfaction, stress level, role conflict, and ambiguity.

10. *Ideal role definition*: This item in the framework involves the development of an ideal description of the role of various types of supervisory officers. It would be based on research literature and experience in other jurisdictions, as well as empirical findings from the current study.

11. *Training implications*: Different types of training implications may be identified -- those associated primarily with current policy determinants of the role, those associated with perceptions of the role, or with the actual role, and finally, those associated with an "ideal" role.

    The training implications would include experience, formal academic training, preservice and inservice training. The objective would be to identify concepts, knowledge, and skills required by the roles.

12. *Training delivery systems and agents*: This aspect of the framework refers to ways in which the training and experience needs might be met by various delivery systems and agents, including universities, the Ministry of Education, federations, boards, and other agencies.

13. *Training completion symbols*: As a result of completing various kinds of training or experiences, incumbents often expect certain types of symbols to be awarded. These include diplomas, degrees or certificates. The question arises as to whether the supervisory officer role should require a legally based certificate.

14. *Research literature and experience in other jurisdictions*: These data are derived from the review of the literature (Chapter 3) and from preliminary and informal investigations related to practices and innovative programs and experiences in other jurisdictions.

2.3. Research questions

As a guide to the collection of empirical data, a set of research questions was developed. These questions are based on the policy questions and the conceptual framework, and are worded so as to be answerable through empirical research. The eight major questions are as follows:

1. What do supervisory officers do?
2. Is there an understanding among critical players which defines the perception of the role of the supervisory officer?
3. What are the career patterns of supervisory officers?
4. How does the board (or ministry) context affect the role of the supervisory officer?
5. How satisfied are supervisory officers with their jobs?
6. What is the current pattern of training, selection, and professional development of supervisory officers, and how well does this prepare them for their jobs?
7. In what ways might the current pattern of training, selection and professional development of supervisory officers be improved?
8. What impact does the supervisory officer have on education in Ontario?

These major research questions, each further elaborated in a series of sub-questions, directed the instrumentation and data collection. Because they are key to understanding the research, Table 2-1 lists the questions and sub-questions and indicates the source of information for answering each one.

Table 2-1: Relationship Between Research Questions and Data

Research Questions	Source of Information
I What do supervisory officers do?	Interview with trustees, principals, supervisory officers.
I.i. What functions do they perform?	
I.ii. What skills do they need to be effective on the job?	
I.iii. How do the roles of supervisory officers differ and what are the factors which affect these differences?	Analysis of related documents.
I.iv. What are the perceptions of supervisory officers with regards to their roles?	
I.v. How do supervisory officers feel about the expectations which accompany their roles?	
II. Is there an understanding among critical players which defines the perception of the role of the supervisory officer?	Interviews with trustees, board personnel, principals and supervisory officers.
II.i. What are the perceptions of others in the supervisory officer's role set regarding the role of the supervisory officer?	The literature.
III What are the career patterns of supervisory officers?	Documentary information relating to demographic characteristics.
III.i. What has been the career path of supervisory officers prior to appointment and what expectations or aspirations do they hold for their future careers?	Interviews with supervisory officers and others within the board.
III.ii. What factors might be contributing to the situation in which the female population is poorly represented among the ranks of supervisory officers?	
IV How does the board context affect the role of the supervisory officer?	Analysis of board documents.
IV.i. How do board structures, policies and procedures help or hinder the supervisory officer in his/her work?	Interviews with supervisory officers and others within the board.
IV.ii. How do roles and functions vary from board to board?	
IV.iii. In what ways does the environmental context of the board affect its operation and the roles of its supervisory officers?	
V How satisfied are supervisory officers with their jobs?	Interviews with supervisory officers and others.
V.i. What are the incentives, rewards and costs associated with the job?	
V.ii. What are the problems which supervisory officers and others perceive with the current situation?	

Table 2-1, continued

Research Questions	Source of Information
VI What is the current pattern of training, selection and professional development of supervisory officers, and how well does this prepare them for their jobs?	Interviews with supervisory officers, trustees, principals.
VI.i. What training and experiences are perceived to be important success determinants for supervisory officers?	The literature
VII In what ways might the current pattern of training, selection and professional development of supervisory officers be improved?	Interviews with supervisory officers, trustees and principals.
VII.i. In what ways do supervisory officers and others think it could be improved?	Learned opinion and the literature of the field.
VII.ii. What academic and administrative experiences should form the core of preservice and inservice training?	
VII.iii. What are the implications for reorganization of boards?	
VII.iv. How might the process be altered to attract qualified candidates with diverse backgrounds?	
VII.v. What roles do institutions currently perform in the preservice and inservice training pattern, and what might they perform?	
VII.vi. Are there other professional development programs currently available which might be appropriate?	
VII.vii. What symbols of accreditation might be considered appropriate for supervisory officers, and how might these be controlled and issued?	
VIII What impact does the supervisory officer have on education in Ontario?	Interviews with supervisory officers, principals, trustees.
VIII.i. What are the perceptions of supervisory officers regarding the impact they have on education in their jurisdictions?	Analysis of interviews.
VIII.ii. What perceptions do others in the role set hold regarding the impact that supervisory officers have on education?	

2.4. Data collection and analysis

The methods of data collection developed from the conceptual framework, and more directly, from the research questions. A review and analysis of the literature helped clarify the issues and provided information on the latest trends in research. Data about all boards in the province was obtained in response to a request by letter. Where information was obtained directly from supervisory officers or others in the role set (either principals or school board chairmen), interviews were used rather than questionnaires. The reasons were twofold: we did not want to categorize the responses in advance, and an interview provided the opportunity to probe for a fuller response.

2.4.1. Sampling

Some data were collected from all boards in Ontario, with the exception of Canadian Forces boards, and those with no schools. For this phase of the study, the total population of boards was 129. (See section 2.4.2 for details.)

For the intensive examination of the role of supervisory officer, a sample of boards was drawn. For purposes of sampling, the total population of boards was defined as those with a director of education, that is, those with an enrolment of at least 2000 students. Under such a definition, the population of boards numbered 113. The objective was to obtain a sample representative of Ontario boards, with particular reference to size, region, the public/separate dimension, and the francophone/anglophone dimension. These factors were taken into account as follows:

- *Size:* Boards were defined as small (fewer than 5,000), medium (5,000 to 20,000), and large (over 20,000 students). After suggestions from the consultative group, large boards were subdivided into Large 1 (city), and Large 2 (county).
- *Region:* Boards were classified into one of four regions; North, West, East and Central. The six regions defined by the Ministry of Education provided the starting point for our definition of region. The three northern regions were grouped as one ("North"), with 34 boards. Of the boards in the ministry's Central Region, 17 continued to be defined as "Central", while 24 were categorized as in either the "East" or "West" regions, since they were similar in size and type of community to boards in the ministry's Eastern and Western Regions. The boards in the region defined as "Central" for purposes of this study were those in and around Metropolitan Toronto, in other words, the areas of heaviest population concentration. Thus, the population of 113 boards by region is summarized as follows:
  - North: 34 boards
  - East: 24 boards
  - West: 38 boards
  - Central: 17 boards
- *Public/Separate*: Public and separate boards were kept distinct when the sample was being drawn, to ensure representation from each group.
- *Francophone/Anglophone*: Fifteen boards were categorized as having an identifiable francophone component. The sample was drawn randomly, and a check made to ensure francophone boards were adequately represented.

The total population of boards from which the sample was drawn is depicted in Table 2-2, which gives the breakdown by size, region and public/separate, and also in Table 2-3, which combines public and separate boards.

The sample drawn from this population or sample frame is distributed as shown in Table 2-4. The 26 boards in the sample are representative of the cells in Table 2-2. Overall, 23 per cent of public boards (16 of 70) and 23 per cent of separate boards (10 of 43) were selected. Small and medium boards were undersampled because of their predominance in the sample (78 per cent of the total). Similarly, large boards were oversampled because they are small in number, and because most supervisory officers in the province work in large boards.

Of 15 boards classified as having a significant francophone component, 4 were drawn in the random sample. This number provided a satisfactory representation of francophone boards.

For the Ministry of Education, three of the six regional offices and the Mowat Block were included in the sample.

Table 2-2: Total Number of Public and Separate Boards in Sample Frame

	Public				Separate				
	Small*	Medium	Large 1	Large 2	Small	Medium	Large 1	Large 2	Total
North	16	6	-	-	8	4	-	-	34
West	-	15	3	4	7	8	-	1	38
East	2	11	1	1	4	4	-	1	23
Central	-	1	5	5	-	3	1	2	17
Total	18	33	9	10	19	19	1	4	113

Note: *Size is defined as
Small: less than 5,000
Medium: 5,000 - 20,000
Large 1: above 20,000 (city boards)
Large 2: above 20,000 (county boards)

Table 2-3: Population of Boards (Public and Separate Combined)

	Small	Medium	Large 1	Large 2	Total
North	24	10	-	-	34
West	7	23	3	5	38
East	6	15	1	2	24
Central	-	4	6	7	17
Total	37	52	10	14	113

Table 2-4: Distribution of Sample Boards

	Public				Separate				
	Small	Medium	Large 1	Large 2	Small	Medium	Large 1	Large 2	Total
North	3	2	-	-	1	2	-	-	8
West	-	2	1	1	1	1	-	1	7
East	-	2	1	-	-	1	-	1	5
Central	-	-	2	2	-	-	1	1	6
Total	3	6	4	3	2	4	1	3	26

In randomly drawn sample, there are 4 Francophone boards.

No. Public Boards = 16
No. Separate Boards = 10

2.4.2. Data collection

Instrumentation

Interview schedules were designed for supervisory officers and for other members of the role set: chairmen of the board and chairmen of the principals' associations (see Appendix B - Interview Schedules [for Supervisory Officers, Chairmen, and Principals]). Interview questions focused on actual supervisory officer roles as experienced by the incumbents and by others who interact with them in the organization. Instrumentation also included a pre-interview questionnaire, asking about background education and experience, and an Organizational Role Stress Scale (Appendix C - Questionnaires [Pre-Interview, and Organizational Role Stress Scale]).

Data from all boards

Each board in Ontario, each Ministry of Education regional office, and the ministry's head office in the Mowat Block was asked to provide:

- position descriptions for all positions requiring supervisory officer papers
- performance review criteria
- current organizational chart

Contacting sample boards and ministry offices

Letters of introduction were sent to each sample board by the appropriate regional office of the Ministry of Education. The letters stressed the importance of the study, provided a summary of the terms and objectives of the research, and asked the boards to grant permission for the research team to gather data. The letters also outlined what would be expected of participating boards in terms of time commitment and number of persons interviewed (see Appendix D - Information for Participating Boards).

Within each board a liaison person was named to coordinate arrangements with the research team. Interviews were scheduled, and relevant documents, such as the annual report, public brochures, and major planning documents, were collected. Information was also gathered about supervisory officer positions and organizational charts from the year 1980-81, to allow comparison with the year of the research (1985-86). In some boards, interviews took place in the offices of the interviewees, while other boards preferred to set up central interview rooms.

Prior to the interviews, each supervisory officer was sent a brief letter, thanking him/her for participating, and requesting the completion of the brief pre-interview questionnaire. The interviewers collected the questionnaires.

Interviews

In each of the sample boards, the research teams interviewed the following persons:

- Director
- All central supervisory officers
- Area supervisory officers (normally 50 per cent were interviewed; details were determined in consultation with each board)
- Chairman of the board
- President of Secondary School Principals' Association
- President of Elementary School Principals' Association

Arrangements for interviewing Ministry of Education personnel were slightly different. In the regional offices, incumbents of virtually all positions requiring supervisory officer qualifications were interviewed, except in one large office where only half the education officers were interviewed. In the Mowat Block, a sample representing approximately 30 per cent of supervisory officers at all levels, from education officer up to assistant deputy minister, was interviewed. It is important to note that the data were collected just prior to a major reorganization in the ministry.

Interviews with supervisory officers were approximately an hour and a half in length, while the other interviews were about an hour. Interviews were scheduled at times agreed upon by the board (or ministry office) and the research teams.

At the end of each interview, supervisory officers were asked to complete the questionnaire designed to measure "Organizational Role Stress", and to send it in a pre-addressed envelope to the research team.

As shown in Tables 2-5 and 2-6, a total of 388 interviews were conducted by the three research teams. There were 314 interviews in boards (Table 2-5): 244 supervisory officers, 25 chairmen of the board, and 45 principals. Table 2-6 shows that in the Ministry of Education, 74 interviews were conducted, 44 in the regional offices and 30 in the Mowat Block.

Table 2-5: Number of Interviews in Boards

Size	Boards	SOs	Principals	Chairmen
Small	5	14	6	5
Medium	9*	56	17	9
Large 1	5	111	10	5
Large 2	6	63	12	6
Total	25*	244	45	25

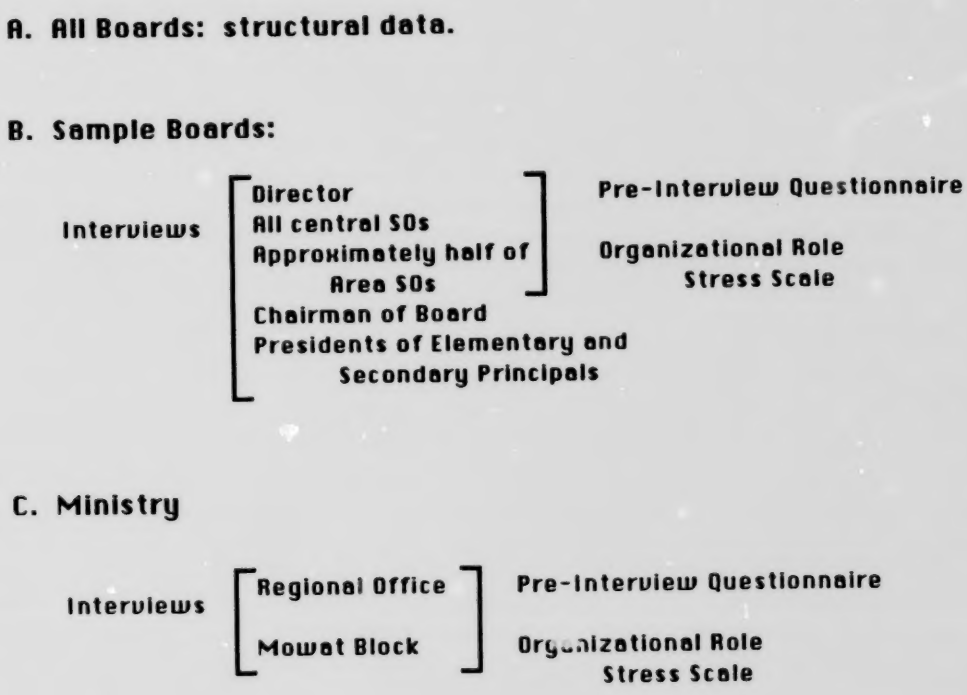
*In one board, it proved impossible to do the research, so 25 rather than 26 boards actually took part.

Table 2-6: Number of Interviews in Ministry

	Director or above	Superintendents	Education Officer	Totals
Regional Offices	3	13	28	44
Mowat Block	3	6	21	30
Total	11	19	49	74

An overview of the data collection process is given in Figure 2-3.

Figure 2-3: Overview of Data Collection Process



2.4.3. Data analysis

The sample frame, as outlined in Table 2-2, provided the framework for data analysis, in that the descriptors of size, region, and public/separate defined different groups of boards. Within this framework, we examined the supervisory officer role, defining the categories as director, business supervisory officer central supervisory officer, area supervisory officer and combined supervisory officer (with both area and system responsibilities).

Structural data from boards

Organization charts and job descriptions, supplemented by other material provided by boards, were used in the development of a typology of board organizational types similar to that developed by Hickcox and Ducharme (1972). Boards were categorized according to the framework developed, and data were organized to allow comparison with the conclusions from their study.

Interview and questionnaire data

For each supervisory officer interviewed, data came from the pre-interview questionnaire, the interview, and the post-interview *Organizational Role Stress Scale*. For the principals and chairmen of the board, data were limited to the interview. Analysis focused on the supervisory officers, with data from trustees and principals used to supplement material drawn from the officers themselves. Two types of analysis were employed:

- numerical or categorical analysis: Responses to the pre-interview questionnaires, interview questions lending themselves to ready categorization, and the *Organizational Role Stress Scales*, were all coded and entered into a computer file. The statistical program SPSSX was

used to calculate frequency counts, cross-tabulations, and correlations between pairs of variables.

- qualitative or descriptive analysis: Responses to most interview questions did not lend themselves to straightforward categorization. For these questions or groups of questions, responses were scanned and general themes identified. Exploratory analysis was carried out to determine what themes best represented the data. Categories were developed to fit the responses, and comparisons were made according to both board type (size and region), and supervisory officer role. Following this step, profiles were developed, representing typical supervisory officers in various board types and roles. The same pattern was followed with principal and trustee interviews; that is, responses were grouped according to general themes and categories (Miles and Huberman, 1984). All supervisory officer interviews were rated on what we termed *style dimensions*. These dimensions emerged as the interviews were analysed, and differences noted in the ways supervisory officers approached their work.

2.5. Development of policy recommendations

The final phase of the study was the development of policy recommendations governing selection, certification, and training of supervisory officers, as well as other aspects of the role. The recommendations are grounded in the empirical data on the role of the supervisory officer, and developed in the context of the conceptual framework and the research questions.

2.6. Limitations of study

The study has both empirical and policy objectives. The empirical aspect involves describing the roles of supervisory officers, then determining whether and how these roles vary depending on differences in board and position. Throughout the report, the reader must bear in mind the limitations of the research, in that data about tasks and responsibilities of supervisory officers are the perceptions of the incumbents, as stated in interviews. We did not actually observe them as they carried out their jobs. Such observations were considered, but the brief sporadic observations that would have been possible would not have yielded valid information nor provided data about the purposes and intentions of supervisory officers as they went about their work. However, interviews with principals and trustees served to provide another view of the supervisory officer role.

A further limitation of the study is the absence of performance data; we do not have any information about *how well* supervisory officers perform their jobs, as distinct from information about what they do and their own perceptions about various aspects of their work. Even if we had collected available data about job performance, there would have been no way to assess their validity. However, were some reasonably objective measure of performance available, it would be possible to compare highly effective and moderately effective supervisory officers, to determine whether they differ on any dimensions relevant to selection and preparation. Leithwood and Stager (1986), in a comparison of highly effective principals with their moderately effective colleagues, isolated several factors with significant implications for selection and training. Although we were unable to gather such data, our data on what we termed *Style Dimensions* (See Chapter 6) relate to some of Leithwood and Stager's findings about how effective principals work.

Chapter 3
Review of the Literature

Consideration of the problem, as outlined in Chapter 1, leads to a series of questions which define the major areas addressed by this study.

- What tasks are supervisory officers required to perform?
- What skills do they need to be able to perform these tasks?
- What are the resulting implications for the selection, preparation, certification, and inservice training of supervisory officers?

Much research has been conducted and much theory propounded, provincially, nationally and internationally, in attempts to answer these questions. This chapter looks at some of the recent and most relevant work in order to define better the directions of this study. It represents a condensed version of a more comprehensive literature review conducted as part of this study.

3.1. Tasks of supervisory officers

The list of tasks of supervisory officers given in the Education Act, " ... do(es) not encompass the range of actual tasks performed by supervisory officers in most school systems" (Ministry of Education white paper *The Way Ahead*, p. 6). In practice, therefore, as Fuerst and Waters found in their extensive literature search, "It is up to each board to designate specific titles and areas of responsibility of the supervisory officers it employs" (1977). The result is perceived diversity in the roles of supervisory officers from one board to the next across the province.

This diversity has shown up in the results of many studies in the past decades, not only in Ontario, but across Canada and the United States as well, suggesting that the role of the supervisory officer differs from jurisdiction to jurisdiction across North America. In an extensive study in the United States, Duea and Bishop (1980) found that the roles of supervisory officers varied greatly according to both the geographical characteristics of each jurisdiction and to its human composition as well. The personal characteristics of the officers themselves contributed to the variation. Larson *et al.* (1981) found that the pattern of the supervisory officer's actual role was affected by all of these factors and that the physical characteristics of the officer's immediate surroundings -- his office and the people around him --affected the pattern of work.

In Ontario, the Ministry of Education in its provincial review of the roles of supervisory officers (1978) also found great diversity according to jurisdiction and incumbent. This review did, however, categorize two major types of job patterns for supervisory officers. In the first, the supervisory officer has responsibility for a group of schools and also some specific system-wide tasks. In the second, the officer has system-wide tasks relating to all schools. These two models may be used separately or combined in any given system, which again means that the actual responsibilities of supervisory officers vary virtually from individual to individual. The Ontario Association of Education Administrative Officials (Auster and

McCordic, 1980) suggest eight general areas of responsibility which supervisory officers might expect to assume, but add that this list is by no means exhaustive and although typical may not be accurate for any one officer.

It must be concluded that there is no single role description for supervisory officers. Their duties apparently are whatever their employing board chooses to assign to them. Some attempt at listing these duties and drawing common threads would be of great value in understanding the role of the supervisory officer.

The Ministry of Education review of 1978 lists four major task areas which have become prominent in recent years, in addition to such traditional tasks as teacher supervision and planning. The review suggested that supervisory officers work much more closely with the school board now, particularly in providing information to the board and the public. Supervisory officers, it suggests, also interact with the community at large more now than previously. They are more involved with contract negotiations and collective agreements with teachers than previously -- a trend that may have weakened the relationship they formerly had with teachers. They have also become more involved in the hiring of teachers and the staffing of schools than previously, but no longer directly supervise teachers, except to offer a second opinion to the principal when necessary.

This emphasis on a new relationship with the school board has been suggested in other research studies. Isherwood *et al.* (1984) found in their survey of chief executive officers across Canada that these supervisory officers in particular seemed to be spending a great deal of time in liaison with the board, particularly in providing information and advice. They also tended to spend a good deal of time acting as a screen for the board, deflecting unnecessary contacts and providing access to the board as necessary. The researchers found that chief executive officers in general (80 per cent) did not think that they were particularly good at this task and tended to be dissatisfied with the way they performed this role.

These Ontario and Canadian findings were consistent with the findings of studies in the United States. Kanner (1977) found that the changing role of the teacher had greatly affected the role of the supervisory officer. As teachers had become more aware and more politically effective, supervisory officers had fallen more and more into the role of adviser to the board, and frequently a chief negotiator for it. Since teachers no longer needed the supervisory officer as their spokesman to the board, he became more and more the board's spokesman to the teachers. This emphasis on negotiation is seen by Hess (1983) as particularly significant.

> Perhaps the single greatest influence on the evolution of personnel practice during the past 22 years was the collective bargaining movement....A by-product of the social protest and reform that marked the 1960s, teacher unionization has reshaped many aspects of educational governance at the district level (p. 232).

Other theorists and researchers have also considered this influence and some have posed some interesting questions. Caldwell and Lehr (1981) discussed whether this involvement of the supervisory officer was desirable. A Canadian theorist (Ritchie, 1985) speculates that some of the conflict which arises in these situations is attributable to the attitude, held by some administrators, that the preferred behaviour of teachers is cooperative subordination. This attitude is clearly likely to cause conflict with teachers who increasingly see themselves as autonomous professionals.

If, as it seems, the supervisory officer is now more involved with providing information and advice to the board, how does this shift translate into actual tasks? Although the literature contains a plethora of lists of tasks, the lists include many common features. One Canadian supervisory officer (Sweezey, 1982) listed his tasks as follows:

- making day-to-day decisions
- selecting and supervising staff
- overseeing operational procedures
- public relations
- labour relations
- providing information to board members
- providing for evaluation
- planning professional development
- supervising program

This list is very similar to the one created by Auster and McCordic (1980) in Ontario.

Agreement on the general areas of endeavour for supervisory officers is not restricted to Canada. The literature provides many examples of United States writings which include similar lists. Kauffman (1981) describes eight major task areas for supervisory officers, as perceived by a school trustee. They include responsibility for the following:

- professional adviser to the board
- provider of information and alternatives
- public relations
- day-to-day operations
- planning
- human relations management
- evaluation of staff and subordinates
- staffing

The American Association of School Administrators (1980) gives a similar list as well. An earlier list from this association (1979) included similar items as the basis for evaluating a supervisory officer, and added business and fiscal management, curriculum and instruction, and professional and personal development as discrete items rather than only inferences, as they seem to be in other lists.

Decker (1979) uses a similar list, again with slightly different wordings, but adds the task of "liaison between the system and other agencies and ministries" (p. 9).

Burch and Danley (1980) look at tasks separate from areas of responsibility, and list five tasks which they found comprised 59 per cent of a supervisory officer's workload:

- information collection and dissemination
- resource allocation
- training and development
- observation and evaluation
- motivation

This list resembles several others which concentrate more on the tasks performed than on the areas of action. A matrix, not unlike the Miklos Matrix of Principal Administrative Action (1968), might be proposed as a way of understanding the relationships involved. The matrix would list areas of administrative action, such as "board", "staff", or "program", on one axis, and types of administrative

action, such as "information dissemination", "planning", or "decision-making" on the other axis, such that the matrix contains a large number of cells, each representing a specific task. Such a matrix of "verbs" and "nouns" might be a useful tool for mapping the listing of duties mentioned earlier and relating certain emphases to factors such as specific role or board environment.

3.2. Skills of supervisory officers

In addition to describing specific tasks, the literature contains information relating to the skills supervisory officers most often use to accomplish them. Two major skills listed by respondents in one Ontario study mentioned earlier (Partlow, 1980) were communication skills and human relations skills. Many other studies have shown that these two competencies are the most frequent tools of the supervisory officer, who often uses them in an unusual and interesting way. Duignan (1980) in Alberta found that the work of supervisory officers was characteristically disjointed and fragmented by frequent interruptions, but consisted mostly of communication and "information brokerage." In the United States, Patterson (1975), in an observational study, found the same characteristics of the job, and adds that the typical supervisory officer's day has a large number of different activities, of necessity mostly short, and Larson *et al.* (1981) in another observational study found an average of eighty activities in a day. Morris (1979) in a self-reporting study found fundamentally the same characteristics, and Pitner (1979) added that most of the activities were mundane. McLeod (1984) amplifies this point in his conclusion to an extensive study of the work of the chief executive officer: "Numerous verbal contacts fill protracted and fragmented daily work schedules. Yet the administrator often is immobilized in meetings of interminable duration, during which boredom must be resisted lest a sudden crisis erupt" (p. 188).

Many studies rely on observations of activity to arrive at these conclusions, but questions arise about the accuracy and usefulness of the observations. Pitner and Ogawa (1981), for example, can say that supervisory officers were observed to spend 15 per cent of their time working at their desks and 46 per cent in meetings. This is a useful description of where the officers were, but not of what they were doing. As Greenfield (1985) says:

> ... (this type of research) describes ... what administrators do, but the description is in terms of behaviour -- what they can be seen to do -- not in terms of action -- what administrators intend to do (p. 15).

Although Pitner and Ogawa (1981), as well as many of the authors cited earlier, conclude that supervisory officers spend more than half of their time in communication, it is much more difficult to say what this communication achieved in the task areas listed earlier. Indeed, it is certainly possible that what some researchers have dismissed as "shooting the breeze" with colleagues in the corridors may in fact be communication which contributes to many facets of those task areas, for, as Macpherson (1984) points out "...talk must be considered action in organizational terms." Both observational and survey-type research seem to suffer from this problem. This poses an even further reaching question about how it can be possible to accurately map what may be a three dimensional activity -- task, arena and skill -- which may be occurring simultaneously in several different quadrants of that three-dimensional grid.

The wide diversity in supervisory officer roles in Ontario could affect the suitability of training and certification procedures. Most of the studies mentioned earlier (Thomas, 1976; Auster and McCordic, 1980; Anastasio and Sage, 1982), however, concluded that the roles tend to differ only in emphasis.

The only case, apart from possibly the chief executive officer, where there is some argument for a substantial difference is that of the senior business official. The Ministry of Education recognizes a difficulty with the current requirements for specific background for business officials, especially in small

and northern settings,and the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (1984) criticizes the current preparation and certification process severely:

> ...the existing route available to acquire the pre-requisites necessary to sit for the supervisory officer exam are not clear or practical...[and]...the existing written exam may not be completely relevant for evaluating an individual with respect to the knowledge and abilities that are required of a business supervisory officer (1984).

Indeed, the combination of requirements for specific certification has proved so rare that between 1976 and 1984 only 17 individuals qualified (*The Way Ahead*, 1974).

In his study in 1977 Lagroix found that senior business officials performed highly specific tasks: financial management and planning; facility planning, maintenance and operation; personnel management; related activities (public relations, report writing); and service activities (transport, insurance, etc.)

These findings are consistent with other descriptions of corresponding roles, such as that given by Hill *et al.* (1982). Evidence indicates a need to clarify the issue of whether the business officer performs a role in which the emphasis is sufficiently specific to warrant a separate classification. Such a clarification would lead naturally to a consideration of the appropriateness of the current preparation and certification requirements. It must be noted that the opposite stance is also taken. Respondents to the Auster and McCordic study (1980) were of the opinion that the current differentiation between the business official and other supervisory officers should be reduced and that people trained in the two different routes should be interchangeable.

Although there is abundant information describing what supervisory officers can be observed to do, what skills they use most, and with whom they interact, there is a need for a coherent framework upon which all of these snapshots of information can be hung to create a total picture. Mintzberg (1973) expressed a similar idea when describing organizations in terms of a marble cake; slices taken from it do not help us picture the whole cake.

3.2.1. Summary

The literature provides a wealth of information about what supervisory officers actually do. Studies have been conducted using several techniques -- questionnaires, surveys, observations, and symposium or conference approaches. Studies generally agree on the types of task areas in which supervisory officers work, the types of skills most important to them, and the groups with whom they usually work. Studies also tend to agree that the typical supervisory officer works in a fragmented and disjointed manner with many interruptions. The way in which studies report their findings seems to depend on which part of this picture the research was designed to address.

There seems to be agreement that supervisory officers are responsible for different aspects of liaison with the board and others, planning, human resource management, resource allocation, budget management and planning, evaluation, supervision of curriculum and instruction, information collection and dissemination, and day to day operations. They deal with board members, the public, ministries and other agencies, parents, teachers and other staff members. Communication and human relations skills are both vital. Different positions entail different emphases, and some positions, in particular that of the business official, seem different enough in emphasis to be quite distinctive.

The absence of a coherent framework has made it difficult to picture the supervisory officer role in its entirety. Such a framework is essential to the drawing of clear implications for preparation and certification.

3.3. The selection and preparation of supervisory officers

Although the career path to supervisory officer status is not rigidly prescribed, the prerequisites to certification impose a certain pattern. Because the requirements for both business and academic officers are so specific, the experience a candidate might be expected to have is to a certain extent predictable. It is most common for a candidate in the academic route to have spent time in the classroom and in the principalship. A recent study in British Columbia (Carlin and Brown, 1985) shows that supervisory officers there tend to have similar backgrounds. They are almost all males (95.5 per cent), averaging 47 years of age. Almost all (91 per cent) have master's degrees in education, and most of these are in Educational Administration. On average they spent 7 years in the classroom, mostly in secondary schools, and 6 years in the principalship. The great majority of them (85 per cent) were formerly officers in teacher associations. These Canadian findings are entirely consistent with those of Cunningham and Hentges (1982) and Lyons (1984) in the United States, and with specific Ontario findings such as those of Auster and McCordic (1980). There is every reason to believe that this pattern of background experience describes current incumbents well. Little consideration seems to be given, however, to the appropriateness of this type of career path. In particular, the question of why so few women are to be found in these jobs is especially pertinent to any consideration of future policy. The whole question of career trajectories and the path to supervisory officer status is one which merits much more consideration than it is apparently given. Selection was, until recently, apparently a haphazard process in which a choice was made from the pool of people who met the established criteria for certification. Assessment programs established in recent years have gained some popularity in providing objective and dependable support in the appointment of supervisory officers.

At present there is no training course specifically required in preparation for certification. As Miklos and Chapman (1986) speculate, this is probably a residue of the times when "the work-experience route into administration" was the only one considered possible (p. 12). Much dependence is placed upon graduate programs as both selection and preparation, although, as Miklos and Chapman point out, universities tend to select on academic criteria and "... the relevance of the programs as preparation for the practice of administration remains problematic" (p. 15).

In their study Auster and McCordic (1980) found that incumbent supervisory officers expressed the opinion that specifically designed courses for the preparation of supervisory officers would be valuable. These writers also recommend specific practical experience, such as internship. Indeed the model suggested would include four components: academic preparation, practical preparation, examination and continuing professional development.

The Ontario Association of School Business Officials recommends a specific training course for certification as a business supervisory officer. The training would consist of six courses: two would be compulsory, these being an introduction to school finance and an introduction to educational administration; the remaining courses would be elective graduate courses in education, public administration or political science (OASBO, 1984).

Respondents to the study by Partlow *et al.* (1980) included trustees, principals and board personnel as well as supervisory officers. Their recommendations were similar, but placed more emphasis on practical preparation, proposing four types of practical experience, all of which should be formally required for aspiring supervisory officers. These included experience in a position of authority, diversity of experience, work supervised by an experienced supervisory officer, and a formal internship. The authors of this study, however, were concerned about the possible lack of breadth in this experience and about the de-emphasis on academic preparation (1980). This concern is echoed by Allison (1984) in summing up discussion at a symposium of supervisory officers, with regard to the suggestion that local

boards could handle this part of the preparation program (Allison, 1984): "Certainly the small and relatively unadvantageously located boards cannot hope to do as well in this regard as their larger more strategically located counterparts." Participants in this symposium also expressed an opinion that the current requirements, specifying as they do that experience must have been gained in Ontario, exclude potentially good candidates. They also questioned whether this requirement was legal under current federal legislation.

A recent extensive study in the United States (Chand, 1983) shows that school boards there define their own expectations of applicants for supervisory jobs in terms of the relevant state certification requirements. When boards were asked to list the skills and competencies they were looking for, they tended either to précis the certification requirements or simply state that the certificate per se guaranteed the necessary skills and competencies. This confidence might be well founded in the light of some of the highly detailed preparation courses required for certification in some states. As an example, McCarthy (1983) lists the Massachusetts requirements. This extremely detailed list covers areas of knowledge, skills and competencies, and personal characteristics, and specifies ways in which each item in the list will be taught and evaluated. There is a strong bias towards academic preparation and academic types of evaluation, but practical experience plays a very important role. Nonetheless, the point is probably well taken that school boards place great confidence in the certification of individuals by a state or provincial body.

In recent years writers in the United States have suggested that the emphasis in preservice programs should be altered to meet modern circumstances. Duea and Bishop (1980) recommend that more attention be given to the various interpersonal and liaison tasks of supervisory officers, but also that supervisory officers be encouraged to keep in touch with students -- an idea which echoes the comment of Cuban given earlier. Aplin (1984) also suggests that preservice courses should perhaps de-emphasize management and spend more time on human relations and a clarification of personal professional values.

In Canada, Greenfield (1985) addresses this latter point in more detail from a theoretical rather than empirical point of view:

> Inevitably then there is a moral dimension to the administrator's decisions. And there is an inevitable moral dimension of the administrator who decides and acts, for he is responsible not only for himself but for others as well (p. 12).

Greenfield recalls that Barnard, in 1938, wrote that administrators needed to be clear on their own professional and personal values in order to be comfortable in their jobs.

> Few persons are able to do such work objectively. Indeed, few can do it long except on the basis of personal conviction ... not conviction that they are obligated as officials to do it, but conviction that what they do for the good of the organization they personally believe to be right.

Greenfield (1985) sees that this has implications for both research into educational administration and study in the field. He recommends that research in educational administration,

> ... should move ... into more richly descriptive models that look beyond surface characteristics into the character of people and into their values, will, fears, fantasies, hopes and intentions (p. 19).

He further summarizes what he sees to be "the great task of administrative studies", which is,"...to give insight into what it means to have and wield power, and what it means to suffer the application of that power" (p. 17). This task could well serve as a prescription for a preservice preparation course for supervisory officers. Although this is a tall order for a course of study, it is what March (1974) declares to be the inherent task of universities, and the task which they perform best -- helping students to develop

new knowledge and to understand its implications. Both are vital. To ignore the latter -- Greenfield's moral dimension -- in favour of the former might produce undesirable results:

> ... The emphasis placed on mastering legislative and Ministerial rules and expectations ... could be expected to produce only a narrow range of administrative competencies ... In short, the preparation process is more likely to produce supervisory officers who are long on conformity and short on creativity (Allison, p. 5).

Hopkirk (1985) goes further, advocating that students of educational administration should look beyond the typical literature and draw from the wider field of knowledge related to moral and ethical decision-making: "Administrators make many more moral choices than they may realize. This becomes evident when they reflectively examine decisions that appear simply 'fact' related" (p. 28).

3.3.1. Summary

Theorists and researchers seem to agree that supervisory officers need preparation which might best be given through a prescribed program. It would include four components, as follows:

1. *Academic preparation* should include the acquisition of certain knowledge bases, and moral and philosophical understandings which include the development of personal value orientations.
2. *Practical preparation* should include a variety of work experiences, mentor relationships, and supervised internships which allow candidates to develop the appropriate skills and competencies.
3. *Evaluation* of the candidate's performance in both these areas should take place before certification, which accredits the candidate for appointment as a supervisory officer. Very few suggestions were made regarding the form this evaluation might take, other than to retain the current examinations. It has certainly been argued, however, that the current examination process reliably evaluates mastery of knowledge but not mastery of job skills. If this is so, it might be reasonable to consider the two areas of evaluation separately. Mastery of knowledge can likely be assessed through examination but skill mastery probably cannot.
4. *On-going professional development* should be an expected, perhaps required, extension of preservice training.

3.4. Inservice training and professional development

As was seen in the previous section, the consideration of appropriate preparation for supervisory officers is not confined to their preservice training. Indeed, as Miklos (1982) points out, "To talk only about preparation or to distinguish between preservice and inservice training may result in distorting reality" (p. 172). The separation of preservice and inservice training is somewhat artificial, particularly with reference to content.

3.4.1. Content

Many writers and researchers tend to concentrate on the method to be used for professional development rather than the content. The tacit assumption with regard to content seems to be that professional development should (a) provide updated information in changing bodies of knowledge, and (b) respond to expressed and perceived current need. Content, it would seem, must be decided in response to changing circumstances, and the order of the day must be flexibility. There appears to be an assumption that the content of inservice training will be topical and will also be part of the current preservice curriculum. The major function of inservice training, therefore, seems to be to keep incumbent

supervisory officers up to date on the information currently being taught to trainee supervisory officers; personal development comes a poor second. Most writers, reasonably so, are more preoccupied with how the inservice training can be offered than they are with its content.

3.4.2. Method

Current methods, it seems generally agreed, are not entirely satisfactory (Partlow *et al.* 1980; Auster and McCordic, 1980; Allison, 1984). Indeed, it has been suggested that "One plausible explanation for a low level of involvement in professional development activities is that the available activities may not seem ... worthwhile" (Allison, 1984, p. 7). Suggestions for improvement do not abound, although there is some consistency among those available. Partlow (1980) emphasizes that a new approach which allows supervisory officers to interact with officers in other systems and to share ideas and experiences would be particularly valuable, especially if appropriately funded by the Ministry. This concept is extended by Allison (1984) to include more far-reaching interactions:

> ... such things as secondments and exchanges involving other boards, organizations and provinces and possibly even private sector organizations. ... there is (also) a very strong argument to be made for guaranteed sabbaticals or other forms of paid development leave (p. 7).

These proposed methods seem well suited to the kind of professional and personal development discussed earlier, and if used in conjunction with more traditional knowledge-updating techniques, might be very useful.

An example of a professional development program used in the United States shows how various methods could be used together (Freeman *et al.* 1980). In this model a specific topic, supervision of instruction, was addressed. Supervisory officers from several systems attended formal lecture-type presentations on the current theory and practice related to the topic. The participants then engaged in small-group sessions in which ideas were exchanged and pursued. The third stage of the model covered the ensuing working year. At regular intervals the participants met again as a sort of support group to share experiences, problems and successes, and thus further develop their understanding of the theories and practicalities related to the topic. Obviously, such a model would require adequate central funding, the support of local boards, and the participation of well-qualified instructors.

3.5. Other important topics which emerge from the literature

Theorists and researchers discuss a number of factors which they see affecting supervisory officers at present, factors which hold serious implications for the selection of supervisory officers, their preservice and inservice training, and the way they carry out their jobs. Three of the most salient of these factors are discussed in this section.

3.5.1. Women in administration

Administrative positions in education have traditionally been occupied by men. The question is frequently raised in the literature, "Why, when the majority of teachers are women, do top managerial positions continue to be occupied by men?" Most of the writing and research reported in the literature seeks an explanation for the under-representation of women, and emphasizes the devising of strategies for change, on the assumption that the proportion of women in administrative positions should more closely represent that in teaching.

In the 1970s writers explained the failure of women to gain administrative positions in terms of socialization and sex role stereotyping, what has been termed the "women's place" model (Estler,1975). This model explains that girls are socialized into passive and nurturing behaviours rather than the assertive and dominant behaviours considered more appropriate in managerial positions. Several strategies were proposed to help women to develop "appropriate" behaviours, on the assumption that if women changed, the statistics would change.

Another approach described in the literature is the "discrimination model". Administrators, according to this explanation, tend to look more favourably on those who are like themselves when hiring new members into the group, and thus are likely to rate other men higher than women (Kanter, 1977).

A number of writers have argued that, since women who do not conform to the stereotypes still have difficulty gaining advancement, there are institutional and organizational factors which prevent their promotion (Kanter, 1977; Wolman and Frank, 1975; Edson, 1980; Adkison, 1981). Some of the recent feminist writers have postulated a similar theory. McBroom (1986) suggests that business organizations tend to be based on traditionally masculine values. Women can have what men have at work, but more and more they sacrifice what men have at home, that is, children and a warm familial refuge from work (McBroom, 1986). Radical feminist writers suggest that there is no solution without changing the organizational framework. A recent description of the "androgynous" administrator suggests a possible direction for thinking of school administration (Erickson, 1985). Erickson (1985) sees the successful school administrator as embodying both typically masculine and typically feminine behaviours: "In other words, an androgynous school administrator ... feels equally comfortable hugging a child or reprimanding a staff member (p. 288)."

In their extensive review of research on teacher education, Lanier and Little (1986) point to evidence (Powell, 1976) that as women began to comprise the bulk of the teaching force, they were nonetheless excluded from the more thorough and substantive professional education enjoyed by male teachers who looked forward to promotion. Teaching was seen as an "up and out" occupation for men, but women were expected to move from teaching to marriage. Much recent research shows that these traditional patterns have not been entirely erased, and women still face internal conflicts, particularly with regard to family roles, and still find it harder to gain promotion than do their male colleagues (Crow, 1985; Lyman and Speizer, 1980; McGee, 1979; Pfiffner, 1979; Woo, 1985; Linn and Hall, 1986; Porat, 1985). There is evidence of mixed messages from society, particularly for women with children, since research suggests that women in administrative positions are less likely to have children (Adkison, 1981; McDade and Drake, 1982).

Women are moving increasingly into administrative positions in education, but the shift is still slow. Asking women to acquire the attributes of their male colleagues is clearly a simplistic solution; a more satisfactory one would involve asking some fundamental questions about the nature of educational organizations and their work arrangements.

A more extensive treatment of this topic is given in a special literature review (Watson & Fullan, 1986) appended to this report (Appendix E - The Role of Women as Supervisory Officers: A Review of the Literature).

3.5.2. Institutional change

A topic of importance to many writers is how changes in educational institutions over the past decades have affected the role of the supervisory officer. A common concern is the general decline in system size and affluence since the boom days of the 1960s and 1970s. March (1974) defined a declining institution as one characterized by an aging administration, aging employees, an oversupply of qualified administrators, decreasing mobility and a lack of opportunities which tends to lock participants into place. Willis (1982) declares that these characteristics accurately describe the Ontario education system at the present time. The characteristic of an aging administration linked with what Willis defines as the high failure rate among supervisory officers in the United States and Canada (1982) leads him to suppose that "... most of the remaining senior Directors of Education in Ontario will leave their posts within this decade" (p. 12). Institutional decline brings its own set of problems, aggravated in this case, according to Willis (1982), by a dramatic change of climate brought about by three major factors. First, school systems have become much more sophisticated and are demanding more and better services. Second, there have been rapid changes in many areas, particularly technological and pedagogical. Third, teachers are more aware and more politically active. Willis proposes that this situation is exacerbated by the fact that most senior supervisory officers began their careers at a time when professionals were revered for their expertise. Now that the rebellious students of the 1960s have become parents and teachers, this situation no longer pertains, and supervisory officers find themselves in an adversarial climate for which many of them are ill- prepared. Willis suggests that "conflict is the main source of an administrator's problems" and says that one of the "essential skills for superintendent survival will be conflict management" (p. 20). He warns that "The Superintendent who survives will ignore the political facts of education at his peril."

At the same time that parents, teachers and teaching have changed dramatically, the political process governing education has gained more prominence among the public in recent years, so that administrators must now also cope with a level of political influence probably new to many of them. Williams (1986) ascribes much of this change in the political climate to the economic factors affecting Canada in recent years:

> Whereas the traditional policy scenario in Canadian education saw the educational professional dominating the process, the recession saw this position changed; the elected provincial politicians now exert the dominant influence. These elected officials respond far more directly to the influence efforts of other constituencies such as the business community and the media rather than to professional educators and local boards of education. Consequently, the policy making process in most provinces in 1984 reflects strong political, as opposed to professional, dominance" (p. 12).

3.5.3. Balance

Change in political climate has created a problem of balance for supervisory officers. The balance between relationships with teachers and with the board is particularly delicate, especially in rural jurisdictions (Tagg, 1983). Balance between management and leadership or pace and quality is particularly difficult nowadays (Duignan, 1979). It is not a question of whether to be a manager or a leader, but rather how to be both such that neither role interferes with the other. In pursuit of this balance, time management is frequently cited as the major problem. This is consistent with the fragmented and rapid pace of supervisory officer activity described earlier. Supervisory officers deplore what Willower and Fraser (1979) call the "Sisyphus Syndrome", wherein management paperwork is never complete and the supervisory officer is not able to spend enough time on leadership activities. Ziegler *et al.* (1983) refute this as a misperception on the part of the supervisory officers, probably fostered by their expectations and training. In an extensive study of superintendents and city managers Ziegler and his

associates found the former much less "beleaguered" than the latter. Willower and Fraser's results are echoed in other studies (Burch and Danley, 1980, for example) in which supervisory officers place the blame for their imbalanced workload on external factors rather than themselves. The outcome of these various constraints is that supervisory officers tend to "cope with rather than organize their time schedules" (Friesen and Duignan, 1980, p. 5). Some say that this may not be bad, that crisis management may be the appropriate mode for supervisory officer activity. Pitner (1979) suggests that a "polychronic" approach -- intentionally doing several things at once rather than scheduling sequential time periods for single activities -- may be not only more appropriate but also a more accurate description of how supervisory officers actually do work. This notion has serious implications for the type of observational study reviewed earlier; if the supervisory officer is really working polychronically, any attempt to categorize activity sequentially will describe what appears to be a fragmented, much interrupted, frequently changing pattern of work, when in fact it may not be so at all. The problem might be a mismatch between instrumentation and reality.

Certain peripheral factors must be considered when examining the context of the supervisory officer in Ontario. The effects of institutional decline, changing social context, conflicting loyalties, and differing approaches to time management probably all merit consideration.

3.6. Summary

Although much has been written about what supervisory officers are expected to do, and what skills they need to perform their tasks, there appears to be a need for a coherent framework. This framework should include a consideration of tasks and skills and differences in the way supervisory officers approach their tasks.

Theorists and researchers seem to agree that there probably should be a prescribed preparation program for supervisory officers. Such a program is typically conceived as including four components -- academic preparation, practical preparation, evaluation, and continuing professional development. Suggestions abound concerning content and structure for such a program. Since the most contentious and debatable component is probably evaluation, it would be of benefit to give special consideration to the current evaluation system and its appropriateness.

Strong indications exist that certain external and peripheral factors should be given more consideration than has been the case. The changing social climate, changing professional and employment circumstances, and the environment of the employing board should probably all be included in the analysis.

Chapter 4
Board Organization Types

4.1. Board organization types

This chapter focuses upon the structural patterns currently in use within Ontario's school boards. This study expanded the categorization scheme used by Hickcox and Ducharme in their 1972 study of Ontario systems to include two additional types of organization pattern.

4.1.1. Pure area type

Below the position of director are area superintendents and a business superintendent. Principals report directly to an area superintendent. Area superintendents do not have specific functional responsibilities, instead performing as generalists. In 1985/86, 6 per cent of Ontario's school boards used this pattern of organization, compared to 7 per cent in 1972.

4.1.2. Tiered patterns

Two variations of the tiered organization are used in the province. These are termed "Tiered A" and "Tiered B."

The Tiered A pattern normally has a level of superintendents with system-wide functional responsibilities between the director and area superintendent levels. The area superintendents may report to a functional superintendent or to a superintendent of operations. Twenty-nine per cent of the province's school boards use this pattern.

A variation of the Tiered A format, called here Tiered B, has a similar structural pattern. However, under this form of organization, area superintendents have functional responsibilities in addition to their area ones. Similarly, functional superintendents may themselves have some area responsibilities. The tiered B pattern is used by 8 per cent of the province's school systems.

In contrast with 1972 when 46 per cent of Ontario school systems used the tiered form of organization, only 22 per cent now use this administrative structure.

4.1.3. Combination

In the combination structure, area and functional management responsibilities are combined in the same position. There is neither a separate functional nor area level. In 1985/86 this was the pattern of organization being used by 31 per cent of all of the school boards in Ontario in contrast to only 10 per cent in 1972.

4.1.4. Functional A and B pattern

As in the case of the two tiered patterns, it was necessary to distinguish between two types of functional patterns. The more frequent Functional A pattern does not include an area superintendent position. Principals report directly to functional service superintendents. Under the functional B pattern there is no director of education; usually the most senior administrator is the business supervisory officer. This pattern is found in small rural boards in the north. Ten boards in Ontario (8 per cent) fell into this organizational category. Currently, 37 per cent of Ontario's boards use one type of the functional organization compared to 30 per cent in 1972.

Comparison of the organization patterns used in 1985 with those identified by Hickcox and Ducharme in their 1972 study of sixty-three Ontario school boards reveals several changes. The most obvious one is the increased use of the combination form and the decreased use of the tiered forms of organization. Table 4-1 shows the shifts in the forms of organization used.

Table 4-1: Comparison of Board Structures Used by Ontario Boards in 1972 and 1985/86

	1972	1985/86	
Combination	10%	31%	
Functional A	29%	29%	37%
Functional B	-	8%	
Pure Area	7%	6%	
Tiered A	46%	15%	22%
Tiered B	-	7%	
Unknown	8%	4%	

4.2. Factors related to the use of particular organization types

A review of the organization types as identified in a 1980/81 study by Auster and McCordic suggests that the trend towards increased use of the combination form of organization was well under way by that time. Similarly, the trend away from the use of tiered organization forms was also clearly established prior to 1980/81. Both trends probably reflect a natural maturation process. During the first decade following the establishment of the county boards in 1969, boards would tend to stabilize using organization types which might differ from those originally adopted. Changes would occur as a result of experience and an evolution involving the closer matching of boards' needs and cultures with particular structural types. This chapter will identify the factors which relate to the organizational patterns used by Ontario school boards.

4.2.1. Size

Table 4-2 illustrates a clear linkage between the size of a board, as defined by enrolment, and the organizational pattern adopted. Tiered organizational patterns are used exclusively by both types of large boards and by a few medium-sized boards. The vast majority (95 per cent) of medium-sized boards prefer the combination model. Similarly, the functional forms of organizational patterns are found predominantly in small boards (89 per cent of small boards use one of these forms). No appreciable change was found from the organizational patterns associated with boards of different sizes in 1980/81.

Table 4-2: Board Size and Structure Type: All Boards 1985/86

	L1	L2	Medium	Small	Total
Unknown			3		3
Combination			36	2	38
Functional			1	1	2
Functional A			5	30	35
Functional B				10	10
Pure Area			5	2	7
Tiered A	8	9	2		19
Tiered B	2	3	3		8
Total	10	12	55	45	122

Note: L1 - above 20,000 (city boards)
L - above 20,000 (county boards)
Medium - 5,000 - 20,000
Small - less than 5,000

When the size variable is broken down, no major differences are found between public and separate school boards. The majority of small boards in both the public and separate systems use the Functional A structure. Among the medium-sized boards, almost 70 per cent of the boards in each system use the combination form of organization. Further, use of other forms of organization among medium-sized boards in both the public and separate systems is evenly distributed; no preferred alternative form of organization is apparent. Among L1 and L2 boards, both systems prefer a variant of the tiered organization, particularly Tiered A format. It is reasonable to conclude that whether a board is public or separate does not have a major effect on the organizational form used; size is the major determinant. Table 4-3 shows the relationship between board size and organizational form in both public and separate school systems.

Table 4-3: Board Structure Use Relative to Board Size in Public and Separate Boards 1985/86

	SMALL		MEDIUM		L1		L2	
	P	S	P	S	P	S	P	S
Combination	0	2 (9%)	22 (69%)	14 (70%)	0	0	0	0
Functional	1 (4%)	0	1 (3%)	0	0	0	0	0
Functional A	15 (65%)	15 (68%)	3 (9%)	2 (10%)	0	0	0	0
Functional B	6 (26%)	4 (18%)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pure Area	1 (4%)	1 (4.5%)	3 (9%)	2 (10%)	0	0	0	0
Tiered A	0	0	1 (3%)	1 (5%)	8 (89%)	0	7 (78%)	2 (67%)
Tiered B	0	0	2 (6%)	1 (5%)	1 (11%)	1 (100%)	2 (22%)	1 (33%)
Total	23	22	32	20	9	1	9	3

Notes: 1. The structure of three boards is unknown. They are not included in this table.
2. The percentages represent the percentage of all boards in the vertical column using each structure.

4.2.2. Region

Table 4-4 illustrates the impact of regional location on the board structure type used. When one compares specific organization types with region, several trends emerge. The combination form of organization is used predominantly in Eastern and Western Ontario; over three-quarters of the total usage of this structure occurred in these two regions. Similar patterns emerged, from an examination of the structures used by public and separate boards by region (see Table 4-5).

Northern Ontario boards have a strong tendency to use one of the functional forms of organization; in fact the Functional B form is found solely in Northern Ontario. Among public boards, almost 90 per cent of the use of the Functional A format is found in Northern Ontario. Use of this form in separate school boards is spread relatively evenly in Western, Northern, and Eastern regions.

The tiered forms of organization are found predominantly in the Central and Western areas. Over 80 per cent of the use of the two tiered forms occurs in these two regions. This pattern too, is largely attributable to board size. Whether boards are public or separate does not appear to be a significant factor.

Finally, the pure area form of organization is found in roughly comparable proportions in the Eastern, Northern, and Western regions. There were no major differences in use pattern between public and separate boards for this type of structure in any of the regions.

Table 4-4: Structure Type vs. Provincial Region - All Boards Combined 1985/86

	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western	Total
Combination	2 (5%)	13 (34%)	7 (18%)	16 (42%)	38
Functional	1 (50%)			1 (50%)	2
Functional A		4 (11%)	24 (69%)	7 (20%)	35
Functional B			10 (100%)		10
Pure Area		3 (43%)	2 (28.5%)	2 (28.5%)	7
Tiered A	10 (53%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	7 (37%)	19
Tiered B	4 (50%)	2 (25%)		2 (25%)	8
Unknown	1 (50%)	0		1 (50%)	2
Total	18	24	44	37	122

Note: The percentages in brackets represent the percentage of all boards using a particular structural type found in each region.

Table 4-5: Structure Type vs. Provincial Region by Public and Separate Boards 1985/86

	Central		Eastern		Northern		Western	
	P	S	P	S	P	S	P	S
Combination	0	12	41	25	18	19	41	44
Functional	50						50	
Functional A			6	18	89	47	6	35
Functional B					100	100		
Pure Area			50	33	25	33	25	33
Tiered A	56	33	6	33			38	33
Tiered B	40	67	20	33			40	

Note: All figures represent the percentage o. total use of each organization type for all public and separate boards using this organization pattern.

4.2.3. Population type

An analysis was conducted to see if particular board structures were associated with any of the four board population categories used in the study: combined, metropolitan, rural, and urban (see Table 4-6). The sample was divided into these four categories according to the extent of urbanization. School systems were defined as urban if they contained no rural area. The only exception was the group of six boards under the umbrella of the Metropolitan Toronto School Board, designated as metropolitan school systems. School boards containing a significant rural area and at least one urban centre were designated as combined. Finally, school boards having no urban centres were designated as rural.

Table 4-6: Population Type and Board Structure, Public and Separate Boards 1985-86

	C		M		R		U	
	P	S	P	S	P	S	P	S
Combination	14	11	-	-	8	3	-	2
Functional	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Functional A	3	7	-	-	15	10	-	-
Functional B	-	-	-	-	6	4	-	-
Pure Area	1	2	-	-	3	1	-	-
Tiered A	7	3	5	-	-	-	4	-
Tiered B	3	2	1	1	-	-	1	-
Unknown	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Total	29	26	6	1	33	18	5	2

Almost half of the school boards having a combined population use the combination organization structure. This tendency holds constant in both public and separate school boards. There is a slightly greater tendency for combined population public boards to use the Tiered A organization, while separate boards favour the use of the Functional A pattern. This may be due to the fact that the combined public boards were larger than separate boards, or to the fact that when these data were collected separate boards focused chiefly on elementary and middle school administration.

Metropolitan population boards use a form of the tiered organization; the majority (5 out of 7) use the Tiered A format. This relationship is probably almost entirely related to board size.

Within rural population boards, the dominant organizational pattern is Functional A. When the Functional B pattern used exclusively by small northern rural boards is included, over two-thirds of all rural boards use the functional structure. Public boards with rural population (24 per cent) use the combination structure, while 12 per cent of separate boards use this structure. These figures are strongly related to the size of the boards.

Urban population boards, like metropolitan population boards, use predominantly one of the tiered forms of organization. The exception is the use by two separate boards of the combination form; both, however, are city boards with medium-size enrolments while virtually all of the other boards are of the L1 type.

It would appear that there are no major differences between public and separate boards with similar population types in the organization patterns they adopt.

The combination form of organization is found almost two-thirds of the time in boards with combined population types. Over 70 per cent of the use of the Functional A structure is found in rural population boards; the remaining 30 per cent is found in combined population boards. The Functional B pattern is exclusively a rural population phenomenon associated with small Northern region boards. The tiered forms of organization are the dominant organization patterns in boards having metropolitan and urban population types.

4.3. Summary

The board organization type used appears to be largely attributable to the size of the jurisdiction. In terms of the major tendency of boards in particular regions, of particular size, and with particular population characteristics, whether the boards are public or separate boards does not appear significant. Boards in certain geographic regions tend to use certain organization patterns more than others. However, this trend seems to relate to size, as the very large boards are found in the Central region and the small rural isolated boards in the North. Population mix is also closely related to size. Thus, organization size as defined by system enrolment appears to be the major factor in the determination of the administrative form of organization chosen by Ontario's school boards.

Chapter 5
Summary Data About Respondents

5.1. Distribution

A total of 388 individuals were interviewed for this study. Of those in the sample boards, 244 are supervisory officers, 45 are principals, and 25 are trustees. Among the supervisory officers, 25 are directors, 13 are assistant directors, 23 are business officers, 63 are academic officers with system-wide functional responsibilities, 33 are assistant supervisory officers, 40 are academic officers with responsibility for a specific group of schools, 25 are academic officers with combined area and functional duties, and 3 are non-academic officers with specific responsibility for plant operation and maintenance. Of those in the ministry offices, 30 are currently employed in the Mowat Block and 44 in regional offices. Table 5-1 summarizes this distribution.

Table 5-1: Numbers of Interviews in Boards used in Numerical Analysis

	Large 1	Large 2	Medium	Small	Total
Directors	5	4	6	7	22
Assistant directors	12	1	0	0	13
Business officers	6	5	5	7	23
Central academic officers	25	18	15	5	63
Area academic officers	23	9	6	2	40
Assistant academic officers	26	4	3	0	33
Combined academic officers	3	13	6	3	25
Plant/maintenance officers	1	1	0	1	3
Trustees	8	7	4	6	25
Principals	13	13	8	11	45
Totals	122	75	53	42	292

Numbers represent actual number of supervisory officers in this category.

Some of the questions asked of supervisory officers, in both boards and ministry offices, in the pre-interview questionnaire were numerically analysed, along with the responses to the stress questionnaire completed following the interview. In addition, numerical analyses of some interview questions with relatively straightforward answers were also performed, to give a first impression of the sample. Not all individuals are included in all parts of this numerical analysis, because of missing or

incomplete data. A total of 222 board supervisory officers and 73 ministry supervisory officers are included in the analyses presented in this chapter. Where there are missing data, the actual number used in analysis of a particular item will be slightly lower.

Among the school board supervisory officers, 91 per cent are male. Of the nineteen women supervisory officers interviewed in boards, two are directors, four have central responsibilities, five are assistant supervisory officers, four are area superintendents, and four have combined duties. Among the ministry supervisory officers, 74 per cent are male. Of the nineteen women supervisory officers interviewed in the ministry, two are at the director level, both in the Mowat block, and the remainder are at the managerial or education officer level.

5.2. Career outlines of school board supervisory officers

Supervisory officers were asked a number of questions about their job experiences and background.

5.2.1. Teaching experience

The teaching experience of academic supervisory officers ranges from one to nineteen years. The average is eight years, and the most common response is five. Women supervisory officers tended to spend significantly more years as classroom teachers than did their male colleagues ($p = .005$). It would seem that most academic supervisory officers spent somewhere between five and ten years as classroom teachers, but rarely did they spend longer than that in the classroom (See Table 5-2).

5.2.2. Experience in principalship

Many academic officers (58 per cent) report experience as vice-principals, but not usually for very long. The range is from one to fourteen years, but the average is just slightly over three years and the modal response is two years.

Most of the academic supervisory officers report experience as principals. The range here is from one to twenty years. The average is seven and a half years, and the most common response is seven years. Women supervisory officers tend to have spent slightly less time in the principalship than their male colleagues. It would seem that very few supervisory officers remain in the principalship for much more than seven years. These few academic-route officers who did not have experience as principals generally had experience in a consultancy position. Although some had worked in a capacity probably best designated as coordinator or consultant, for reasons peculiar to a specific board these positions had been designated superintendencies. Thus, a very small group of supervisory officers, including two directors in this sample, did not have experience as principals (which, after all, is not necessary for possession of a supervisory officer certificate), but rather came through a staff route.

5.2.3. Other related experience

Relatively few academic supervisory officers (28 per cent) report experience in a staff or consultative role. Women supervisory officers are slightly more likely to have been consultants than their male colleagues. The most common number of years spent in such a position is two years, and the average is four and a half. The range of years spent in a staff position is from one to fifteen years, but very few individuals spent more than five years in such a position.

Table 5-2: Board Supervisory Officers: Years of Teaching Experience by Role

	1-5	6-10	11-15	16+
Director	8 (36.4%)	10 (45.5%)	3 (13.6%)	1 (4.5%)
Asst. Director	3 (25.0%)	7 (58.3%)	2 (16.7%)	0
Central	16 (27.6%)	28 (48.3%)	13 (22.4%)	1 (1.7%)
Asst. supervisory officer	6 (21.4%)	15 (53.6%)	6 (21.4%)	1 (3.6%)
Area	10 (27.0%)	20 (54.1%)	6 16.2%)	1 (2.7%)
Combined	9 (36.0%)	9 (36.0%)	3 (12.0%)	4 (16.0%)

Numbers represent actual number of supervisory officers in this category. Percentages are row percentages.

The majority of business officers (78 per cent) report experience in the business world. The number of years spent in business ranges from one to twenty-six years, with an average of approximately eleven years. A few business officers report an average of seven years' experience in government, and a few report an average of eight years in the private sector before taking up employment in the school system.

5.2.4. Experience as supervisory officers

Directors, especially in large boards, generally have had much more experience in other supervisory officer roles than their colleagues (see Table 5-3). This is to be expected, since director is the top position on the career ladder, unless one becomes a director of a larger system. In contrast, 83 per cent of business officers have no experience in another supervisory role. In fact, the position of business officer is something of an anomaly, since it is usually the only position on that particular career ladder in all but a few large systems. Business officers also tend to have been on the job much longer than their academic colleagues. This indicates that there may be a need for a substantial number of new business officers over the next few years as incumbents reach retirement age.

The problem of an aging incumbent cohort pertains to academic-route supervisory officers as well. Willis's prediction, cited in Chapter 3, can be supported by April 1986 figures from the OAEAO which suggest that 48 per cent of incumbent supervisory officers will be eligible to retire in the next eight years. At first glance, this seems an odd situation. However, when one adds up the experience which normally

Table 5-3: Board Supervisory Officers: Years in Another Supervisory Role by Role

	None	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+
Director	0	5 (23.8%)	10 (47.6%)	5 (23.8%)	1 (4.8%)	0
Asst. Director	0	3 (25.0%)	7 (58.3%)	1 (8.3%)	0	1 (8.3%)
Business	19 (82.6%)	1 (4.3%)	2 (8.7%)	1 (4.3%)	0	0
Central	25 (39.7%)	20 (31.7%)	12 (19.0%)	4 (6.3%)	2 (3.2%)	0
Asst. supervisory officer	17 (53.1%)	9 (28.1%)	6 (18.8%)	0	0	0
Area	25 (62.5%)	10 (25.0%)	1 (2.5%)	4 (10.0%)	0	0
Combined	16 (64.0%)	7 (28.0%)	2 (8.0%)	0	0	0

Numbers represent actual number of supervisory officers in this category. Percentages are row percentages.

precedes supervisory officer status -- 8 years' teaching, 3 years in the vice-principalship, 7 in the principalship -- and the length of academic training necessary, it seems likely that the average candidate is about 42 before becoming a supervisory officer. Since many academic officers can retire in their late fifties, tenure in the supervisory officer role might normally be in the region of 14 or 15 years. Thus, at any given time, half of the incumbent population of academic supervisory officers could well be retiring within a decade. In the days of rapid expansion in the 1960s and 1970s, when promotion came earlier, supervisory officers could be expected to be in the role much longer. It is probably simply a fact of today's circumstances that a substantial number of academic supervisory officers will always be relatively close to retirement. The situation for business officers is markedly different, since they tend to spend fewer years in preparatory work experience, take up the position at an earlier age, and are not able to retire until much later than their academic colleagues.

When directors and business officers are removed from the sample, the remaining academic officers exhibit some interesting characteristics relative to experience. More than half (64 per cent) have five years' or less experience in their current positions (see Table 5-4). Although the difference is not statistically significant, women supervisory officers tend to be relatively new to their current positions.

There are some academic officers (8 per cent) with very long tenure in the same position, ranging up to twenty-four years, but the typical academic officer has been in his/her current position only a few years at best. In addition, the typical officer is probably in his/her first role as a supervisory officer, so he/she is new not only to the specific position but also to the supervisory role. Again, while the difference is not statistically significant, women supervisory officers tend to be relatively new to the role. Almost half (48 per cent) of the academic officers have no experience in another supervisory officer role; most of the women officers fall into this group. Of the remaining group more than half have less than five years' experience in any other supervisory officer role. These figures indicate clearly that, although there are academic officers with many years' experience, the typical incumbents are relatively new to the role.

Table 5-4: Board Supervisory Officers: Years in Current Position by Role

Role	1-5	6-10	11-15	16+
Director	13 (59.1%)	5 (22.7%)	2 (9.1%)	2 (9.1%)
Asst. Director	7 (53.8%)	3 (23.1%)	0	3 (23.1%)
Business	5 (22.7%)	2 (9.1%)	7 (31.8%)	8 (36.3%)
Central	35 (56.5%)	18 (29.0%)	5 (8.1%)	4 (6.4%)
Asst. supervisory officer	20 (64.5%)	7 (22.6%)	1 (3.2%)	3 (9.7%)
Area supervisory officer	24 (61.5%)	6 (15.4%)	5 (12.8%)	4 (10.3%)
Combined	21 (84.0%)	2 (8.0%)	0	2 (8.0%)

Numbers represent actual number of supervisory officers in this category. Percentages are row percentages.

The great majority (81 per cent) of these officers were hired from inside the system, and typically have worked in the same system for a long time. Indeed, breadth of experience is very limited. In this sample only nineteen supervisory officers (8 per cent) have any experience outside Ontario. Of these, twelve had experience out of the country, usually prior to immigration. Directors and business officers were more often hired from outside the system than were academic officers. The average length of experience in the same system for all supervisory officers is twenty years, and ranges from one to forty years. It is notable that officers in large boards tend to have been in the same system longer than their

colleagues in smaller boards, indicating that smaller boards more often hire externally (See Table 5-5). Women supervisory officers tend to have spent more years in the same system than their male counterparts.

5.2.5. Academic qualifications

The majority of supervisory officers hold master's degrees (74 per cent), mostly in Educational Administration. A small number (9 per cent) hold doctorates, and the remaining few (18 per cent) hold bachelor's degrees or another qualification, such as a business-related qualification. As a general rule, directors are more likely to hold doctorates, and business officers to hold alternative qualifications. Women supervisory officers tend to be better qualified than their male counterparts on average, probably because newer supervisory officers are generally better qualified academically, and, as indicated above, women officers tend to be newer to the role than men.

5.2.6. Typical profiles

The trends noted above suggest that women supervisory officers frequently have spent longer in both the system and the classroom before appointment to the supervisory role than did their male colleagues. The researchers had intended to investigate differences in personal background between men and women supervisory officers, since the literature search suggested that there would be a difference in family status. Many respondents refused to divulge such personal information and thus there were insufficient responses to render these data valid.

Clearly, the differences between directors, business officers, and academic officers are such that different "typical" profiles could be drawn. Profiles of directors, business officers, and the various categories of academic officer were therefore developed. Analysis of the academic roles revealed little difference in terms of the tenure and experience of the incumbents. The profiles of academic officers were therefore collapsed into a single profile. Table 5-6 shows the three typical profiles generated as a result of these analyses.

Since there was some indication that board size might affect a supervisory officer's background and experience, typical profiles for each board size groupings were also drawn. Analysis of these profiles showed no significant differences. The minor differences that emerged did not seem significant enough to justify further investigation, since the background experiences of people in the roles seemed more alike than different.

In general, academic officers, business officers and directors seem to form three fairly distinct groups of supervisory officers. Directors typically tend to have spent slightly fewer years in preparatory work experience (teaching and principalship) than academic officers, but have been supervisory officers for longer and have spent more years in other supervisory officer roles. Business officers typically have been supervisory officers for longer than either directors or academic officers, and typically have occupied their current positions for longer as well. Business officers generally spent slightly fewer years in preparatory work experience than did academic officers, and considerably fewer in other supervisory roles. The general impression is that business officers work in the private sector for several years before being employed by a school system, then remain in the job for a long time. Directors have been more mobile than average, having progressed up the career ladder at a fairly brisk pace. Academic officers typically are new to their jobs but tend to have been in the same system for many years. The numbers at the top ends of the ranges, in contrast to the means, show that there are a few academic officers who defy this typical profile.

Table 5-5: Board Supervisory Officers: Years in the System

	Years in the System by Board Size					
Board Size	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	25+
Large 1	4 (4.1%)	7 (7.1%)	8 (8.2%)	23 (23.5%)	23 (23.5%)	33 (33.7%)
Large 2	5 (9.3)	9 (16.7%	10 (18.5%)	15 (27.8%)	6 (11.1%)	9 (16.7%)
Medium	4 (10.3%)	4 (10.3%)	5 (12.8%)	15 (38.5%)	6 (15.4%)	5 (12.8%)
Small	7 (29.2%)	4 (16.7%)	1 (4.2%)	8 (33.3%)	2 (8.3%)	2 (8.3%)
						N = 215

	Years in the System by Role					
Role	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	25+
Director	5 (22.7%)	3 (13.6%)	3 (13.6%)	5 (22.7%)	3 (13.6%)	3
Business officers	2 (9.5%)	2 (9.5%)	4 (19.0%)	10 (47.6%)	2 (9.5%)	1 (4.8%)
Academic officers	13 (7.7%)	18 (10.7%)	17 (10.1%)	44 (26.0%)	32 (18.9%)	45 (26.6%)
						N = 215

Numbers represent actual number of supervisory officers in this category. Percentages are row percentages.

Table 5-6: Typical Supervisory Officer Profiles

	Director (N = 22)	Business (N = 23)	Academic (N = 174)
Years in current job	6 (1-18)	13 (1-26)	6 (1-24)
Years in this system	14 (9-30)	15 (2-26)	20 (1-40)
Years outside of education	None	11 (1-26)	None
Years teaching	7 (1-16)	None	8 (1-19)
Years principalship	5 (1-13)	None	7 (1-20)
Years other supervisory officer role	9 (3-18)	0 (5-12)	3 (1-24)
Years as supervisory officer	14 (3-24)	15 (2-26)	9 (1-39)
Future plans	Stay in present job until retirement	Stay in present job until retirement	Seek promotion in this system

Note: single figure is a mean, figures in brackets represent ranges.

5.3. Career outlines of Ministry of Education supervisory officers

5.3.1. Distribution

For purposes of numerical analysis, 73 interviews were coded. The subjects of 44 of the interviews work in regional offices, 29 in the Mowat Block. In total, 6 subjects rank at the director level or higher, 2 are business specialists, 16 are at the superintendent level, and 48 are education officers. Table 5-7 shows how these interviews are distributed among the various levels.

Table 5-7: Number of Interviews Conducted in the Ministry

	Regional Offices	Mowat Block	Total
Assistant Deputy Minister	0	1	1
Director level	3	2	5
Business specialist	1	1	2
Superintendent level	12	4	16
Education officer level	28	21	49
Totals	44	29	73

5.3.2. Experience as supervisory officers

Ministry supervisory officers have not, as a rule, spent a long time in the positions they currently hold, and the women tend to have spent slightly less time than the men. Time in the current position ranges from 1 to 21 years, with a mean of 5 years. However, 55 per cent of the sample had held their current positions for two years or less -- a remarkably high figure in its own right, and much higher than is the case for supervisory officers in boards.

Ministry officers had not spent as many years in the ministry as their board counterparts had in their systems. This is not surprising, since just over half (51 per cent) of the ministry officers were hired from outside, substantially more than in school systems. Almost a third (32 per cent) of the ministry officers have been with the ministry for 2 years or less; the average is 9.9 years and the range 1 to 25 years.

5.3.3. School board experience

The majority of ministry officers (92 per cent) report having experience in classroom teaching, ranging from 3 to 18 years. The modal response is 10 years, and the mean is 9 6. Women supervisory officers have slightly more classroom experience than males. There is a significant difference between board and ministry supervisory officers in that the latter tend to have more years of teaching experience than their board colleagues ($p = .008$).

Only 41 per cent of the ministry officers report experience as principals, a proportion significantly lower than is the case in boards ($p = .001$). Those who had been principals tended to have spent about the same time in that position as their board colleagues, with an average of 4.8 years and a range of 1 to 14 years. Again, women officers were slightly less likely to have been principals.

In comparison with their board colleagues, ministry supervisory officers are less likely to have been principals and more likely to have been in the staff or consultative position prior to joining the ministry. Officers who have been with the ministry for a shorter time are much more likely to have had staff experience, and women officers are more likely to have been consultants.

Not all ministry officers interviewed hold supervisory officer papers. Those who do report between 1 and 21 years of experience as supervisory officers. However, like their academic colleagues in boards, the majority have been supervisory officers for only a short time; 59 per cent have fewer than 5 years' experience and 25 per cent fewer than one year.

5.3.4. Academic qualifications

The majority of ministry officers hold master's degrees (73 per cent), but most are in specialties other than Educational Administration. A few (6 per cent) have doctorates and the remainder hold bachelor's degrees. Women typically have better qualifications, again probably because newer supervisory officers (such as women) are generally more highly qualified.

5.3.5. Summary

Ministry officers, who are generally hired from school boards, are likely to have been classroom teachers for longer than their board colleagues, are increasingly more likely to have been consultants, rather than principals, and are likely to hold a master's degree in a speciality other than Educational Administration. It seems there is a substantial difference between the backgrounds of school board and ministry supervisory officers; the former tend to be line-oriented, and ministry people staff-oriented. Whether this variance is related to the type of work they do will be discussed in a later chapter.

5.4. Future career plans of school board supervisory officers

Supervisory officers were asked during the interview to talk about their career plans. Many were reluctant to do so, and many declared that they did not have clear plans. The most common response (42 per cent) is the desire to seek another supervisory officer position in the same system, obtaining promotion or variety without leaving the board. These responses include the 17 per cent of interviewees who wish to seek directorships -- a rather large proportion of the group. The next most common response (28 per cent) is the intention to retire without further career moves. Some of these interviewees have elaborate plans for their retirement years, often still involved in the educational field, and some have no specific plans at all. The remaining respon es included the desire to move to a larger board. This intention is expressed most often by business officers, who, as seen earlier, usually lack the option of moving to another position in the same system, and by supervisory officers in small and, to a lesser degree, medium-sized systems ($p = .003$), who wish to advance their careers by moving to a bigger system. Data presented earlier suggest that this kind of lateral movement has not been common in the past. Only a very small group (8 per cent) had no future plans at all.

Again there appear to be two major groupings of supervisory officers: those who will be retiring in the next few years and have no further career ambitions, and those who are relatively new to the job and wish to advance. Not surprisingly, superintendents who are relatively new in the job, particularly area superintendents and those with combined area and functional duties, are more likely to be seeking advancement and promotion. Supervisory officers in larger boards tend to see themselves as remaining in the same system, but supervisory officers in medium and small boards are more likely to consider the possibility of seeking employment in a another, larger system.

5.5. Future career plans of Ministry of Education supervisory officers

When ministry officers were asked what plans they have for their future careers, the largest group of responses (40 per cent) expressed the intention to remain in the ministry, and approximately half of these individuals intended to seek promotion. The next largest group (34 per cent) expressed uncertainty about future plans. A few interviewees (11 per cent) declared that they wished to return to a school board. The remaining interviewees (16 per cent) will be retiring soon. Clearly many supervisory officers working in the ministry see it as a permanent career placement and not as a temporary absence from a school board. Since an intention to seek a position in the ministry was rarely expressed by school board officers, it seems that the two career paths are perceived to be quite separate, a distinction possibly related to the staff/line distinction noted earlier. In school systems, the line-oriented career ladder leads to a directorship, but the staff-oriented career ladder tends to be short. A move to the ministry lengthens it significantly.

The great majority of board supervisory officers have fairly clearly articulated plans for the future, even though these plans tend to be general in nature. On the other hand, a large group of ministry supervisory officers do not have plans for the future, and express uncertainty about what it might hold. This tendency may simply be in the nature of civil service roles, which are always dependent upon changing political climate and emphases, or may reflect a period of uncertainty in the ministry, since the interviews coincided with some substantial changes. Whatever the explanation, it seems that career futures in the ministry are much less certain than they are in school systems.

PART B: SCHOOL BOARD SUPERVISORY OFFICERS

Chapter 6
What Do Supervisory Officers Do?

6.1. Introduction

To a great extent, the data in this chapter provide the basis for the policy recommendations that follow later in the report. Recommendations for change must be based on a knowledge about the actual roles of supervisory officers around the province. As one writer has stated:

> One of the persistent difficulties with programs for reform in the training of administrators is the tendency to try to improve managerial behavior in ways that are far removed from the ordinary organization of managerial life. Unless we start from an awareness of what administrators do, and some idea of why they organize their lives in the way that they do, we are likely to generate recommendations that are naive (March, 1974, p. 20).

With reference to the Research Questions listed in Chapter 2, this chapter deals with Question I (what do supervisory officers do?) and Question II (the perceptions about the role of the supervisory officer). In trying to determine what supervisory officers do, the researchers had three categories of data available: job descriptions, interviews with supervisory officers, and interviews with principals and trustees. More is said later about each of these data sources. There was no predetermined framework for the analysis; rather the objective was to derive some useful framework from an examination of the data.

The chapter is structured around successive descriptions and analyses of the data. To elucidate as many aspects of the role as possible, we have examined the material in different ways and from several perspectives (Miles and Huberman, 1984). The examination was directed at determining what supervisory officers do, but also at identifying both common features and differences when descriptions are compared. The sequence of the chapter is as follows:

- Outline of responsibilities and tasks (clustered according to five key roles of *director, business, central, area,* and *combined*).
- Underlying actions and content involved in tasks.
- Key features of the work (interpersonal dealings, time, discretionary authority).
- Variations in style (how supervisory officers go about their work).
- Impact of what supervisory officers do (as perceived by themselves and by others.)
- Changes in the supervisory officer role over time.
- Profile of board factors.
- Conclusions and implications.

Before presenting the results of the analyses, it may be useful to provide a description of the three sources of data available to us in determining what supervisory officers do.

Job descriptions

In the early stages of the study, each of the boards in the total population was asked to submit job descriptions for each role in the board that required supervisory officer papers. (All but 6 boards complied with this request.) These documents provide the formal expectations of each role as established by provincial legislation and regulation, and by local school board regulations, procedures and bylaws.

All the job descriptions were categorized by title; for example, Director, Superintendent of Personnel, and so forth. Key descriptors were identified for each role, and from these descriptors a typical profile was developed. Some roles had a variety of titles associated with them; Area Superintendent, for instance, might be called School Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent of Instruction or Superintendent of Education. When all these titles shared the same descriptors, they were placed in the same role category.

As anticipated, examination of the job descriptions from the sample boards was congruent with the job descriptions for the total population. To describe the formal expectations of supervisory officers as specified in the written job descriptions, a profile for each of five key roles was developed from the descriptions submitted by the sample boards. The roles identified were *Director, Superintendent of Business, Central Office Superintendent, Area Superintendent, and Combined (Area and Central) Superintendent.*

Interviews with supervisory officers

These interviews are the main source of data for the chapter. Particularly important are responses to questions in Section B of the interview (see Appendix B for the interview schedule), in which respondents were asked to describe various features of their role or function. The most critical questions are B1 (responsibilities and tasks over the last two months) and B4 (people dealt with in the course of carrying out the job), while other questions in the section provide supplementary data. Responses to questions D2 (perceived impact on the educational system if your role ceased to exist), and G2 (expected changes to the supervisory officer role in the future) are also discussed.

As noted in Chapter 2, 244 board supervisory officers were interviewed. The breakdown of the sample by board size and by role is given in Table 6-1. As indicated, where numbers differ from those given in the earlier description of the sample, it is because in some cases, data were missing or incomplete, and also because role categories were changed following preliminary analysis of the data. Originally, Associate and Assistant Directors were a separate category, as were Assistant Superintendents. Examination of the interviews suggested these persons should be categorized as *central*, *area* or *business*, depending on their functional responsibilities.

Interviews with principals and trustees

These interviews provide additional information about the supervisory officer role, from the point of view of others in the role set. As indicated in Chapter 2, 45 principals and 25 trustees were interviewed.

Table 6-1: Numbers of Supervisory Officers Interviewed

	Small	Medium	Large 1	Large 2	Total
Director	5	9	5	6	25
Business*	5	9	9	9	32
Central	2	23	64	22	112
Area	2	10	33	15	59
Combined	0	5	0	11	16
Total	14	56	111	63	244

Associate and Assistant Directors, and Assistant Superintendents, were classified as Business, Central or Area, depending on their functional responsibilities.

*includes 5 Plant supervisory officers.

Note: The numbers in each cell may not correspond precisely with the number available for any given analysis, due to missing or incomplete data.

6.2. Tasks and responsibilities

6.2.1. Development of task clusters

At the beginning of the interview, the respondent was asked to talk about the main tasks engaged in over the last two months. The time restriction was to encourage interviewees to focus on recent and specific work. The most striking point emerging from a first look at the data is the wide range of tasks mentioned. A selection from the interviews gives a flavour of the variety:

- "I've been negotiating for the purchase of a property for an outdoor education centre."
- "Evaluating principals."
- "I've been doing salary negotiations with the Teachers' Federation."
- "Visit schools on a regular basis."
- "Develop curriculum support documents for the new ministry guidelines."
- "Acting as a last resort in dealing with irate parents."
- "Managing a school system that's shrinking fast."
- "Prepare budget and financial statements."
- "Spend a lot of time at meetings; support to trustees, consulting with community, working out policy."
- "I've had to re-organize my department."
- "Be available to people: deal with crises as they occur."
- "I was chairing a committee to develop a board policy on dealing with pediculosis."
- "Meet with new trustees, get to know their concerns, orient them to the board."
- "Ensure that construction projects (new schools, alterations) are on schedule and according to board's requirements."
- "I'm trying to build an organizational consensus about the kind of education we provide and the values we hold."

The list indicates the problem in determining the answer to the question, "What do supervisory officers say they do?", when activities range from dealing with an irate parent to negotiating contracts, from chairing a committee on pediculosis to managing a shrinking school system. Like the list of duties given in the Regulations, the list above combines general and specific duties, concrete tasks and more abstract goals. Are there patterns in these activities, so disparate at first glance?

As the first step in analysis, interview reports were grouped by role, as had been done with the job descriptions. An attempt was made to identify themes emerging from the data, and to determine what kinds of tasks were most frequently mentioned. The objective was to compare tasks and responsibilities across different roles, and across different types of boards.

An initial categorization determined that the tasks and responsibilities most frequently mentioned by academic supervisory officers had to do with program review and curriculum development, personnel and staffing, and staff development. (Each of these three categories was mentioned by about half the respondents.) Not surprisingly, business supervisory officers all mentioned budget preparation and analysis, and financial matters, tasks which were also listed by many academic supervisory officers. Attempts were made to develop "clusters", common threads to pull together the diverse chunks of data. Rather than counting responses, clustering involves searching for patterns, and determining how the patterns differ across groups.

"Typical task profiles" were developed, showing tasks commonly mentioned by supervisory officers in different categories. This was done for each supervisory officer role (director, business, central, area, and combined), and for each board size (Small, Medium, Large 1 and Large 2). These profiles were not intended to be taken as exhaustive, but simply as representative of interview responses.

At this point, two analyses had been done; one used job descriptions, while the other used interview data, specifically responses to the question about tasks and responsibilities. Although the job descriptions gave a less fully developed picture of the job, in that the subtleties and nuances of the work are not depicted, the "task profiles" from the two sources showed similar patterns, and the profiles which follow have been developed using data from both job descriptions and interview data. As noted, Table 6-1 shows the number of supervisory officers interviewed in each role, and for each board size.

The reader will note that separate profiles are not shown for supervisory officers in different regions, or for supervisory officers in public versus separate boards. Preliminary analysis showed no appreciable role differences dependent on these factors, a result which was initially somewhat surprising. Supervisory officers themselves feel that working in the north, for instance, or in a small board, is very different from working in the south, or in a large board. Why then did the data not reveal distinctive task profiles? We will come back to the question following the presentation of the profiles, but in brief, we believe that the differences relate more to the immediate context of the work than to the tasks themselves. In other words, time spent travelling, the impact of local issues, the number of people dealt with in the board, the size of the administrative team -- all these affect the experience of being a supervisory officer, making jobs in different boards appear very different from each other. We will attempt to show that such differences affect the nature of the tasks performed less than might be expected.

6.2.2. Task profiles

Directors of Education

What do Directors of Education do? According to the job descriptions, the incumbents have similar roles regardless of size of board, denomination, or language. There is one exception: the director of a small board has direct responsibility for Special Services and French Immersion Programs.

Most of the job descriptions recognize the legislative requirements specified in the Education Act either tacitly or explicitly. As Chief Educational Officer and Chief Executive Officer, the director is charged with educational and administrative leadership for the school system. In addition, the role is assigned the responsibility of Secretary or Secretary-Treasurer to the board.

In general terms the prime responsibility of this position is identified as the efficient management and coordination of the school system. To accomplish such a task, the director delegates technical duties to the superintendents within the board, and thus must supervise and direct these subordinates to ensure a smooth-running system.

The director provides the interface between the trustees and the school system. The incumbent is the key information resource person for the school board and is expected to advise the board with respect to policy formation and trends in the field of education. Through this position, board policy is expected to be implemented through the system and feedback provided to the board on the effectiveness of these policies. The director makes recommendations in numerous areas to the trustees, including staffing, conditions of facilities and supplies, and the progress, health, and safety of pupils. The incumbent is expected to develop an effective administrative organization as well as an effective communication network within the system and out to the community. Good public relations are expected to start at the directorship level. Ultimate responsibility for the financial health of the system rests with this position. Short- and long-range planning is coordinated by the incumbent.

In the role of Chief Educational Officer, the director is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the educational needs of the students are being met. In a continuous quest

Example from interviews

Manage the system in accordance with board and ministry policies.

Getting the system organized, updating and coordinating policies.

Trouble-shooting with superintendents over land acquisitions, personnel matters etc.

Orientation of newly elected trustees, to ensure they understand system and its emphasis on excellence.

Through meetings and committees, deal with effects of extension of funding to separate schools.

Identify priorities in the board ("identify the vision of the system").

Meet with people in and out of system (problem solving, listening to concerns). (When directed outside system, can be described as public relations).

Be a leadership influence on trustees, supervisory officers, principals, and others (get the best out of all concerned).

Through Administrative Council, set long range plans and budget.

Ensure that budget accurately reflects priorities of board, and that people in system have input.

Development of a major report on planning, linking board plans with ministry developments.

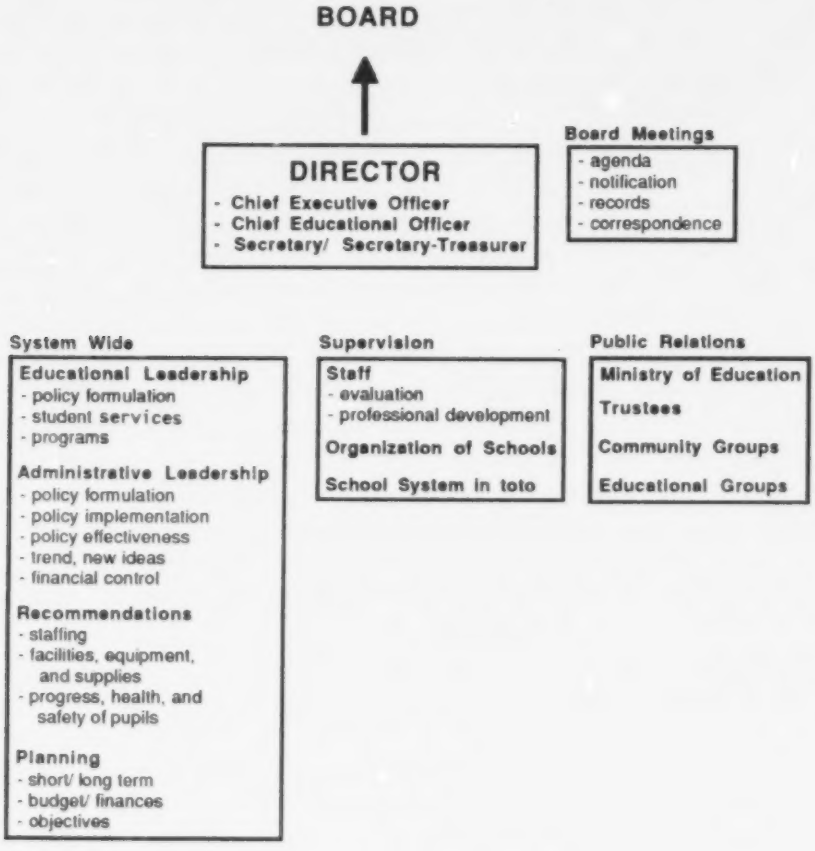
to improve the quality of instruction in the educational system, the director ensures that all staff are benefiting from professional development programs.

Remind everyone that the real reason for what we are doing is better education.

Finally, as secretary to the board, the director is expected to attend all board meetings and appropriate committee meetings. In addition, preparation of the agenda, notification of the members, and recording and safekeeping of the minutes are defined by the Education Act as the responsibility of the director. Figure 6-1 presents a typical job profile (based on job descriptions and interview data) for the role of Director.

Represent the board in all things, including preparation of correspondence on behalf of the board.

Figure 6-1: Role of Director



There is no single way to capture and describe what supervisory officers do. Before getting into the underlying analysis, it may be useful to provide brief composite portraits of what might be a typical day's work. These examples are attempts to give a flavour of the work; the flow, the variety and the context of the five supervisory officer roles identified. They are based on material from the interviews, constructed from different individual responses, formulated into portraits of a typical day's work for each of the five roles. In fact, there is no "typical day" in the life of a supervisory officer.

On arriving at the board offices at 8:15, the director begins to catch up on correspondence, reading letters, indicating to whom they should be directed for a response. Supervisory officers drop in on an individual basis to tell the director about issues that are forthcoming, or to get input to assist with solving any problems they are dealing with.

Academic Council (the director and the superintendents) meets from 9:00 until 11:30, with a variety of items on the agenda. Each superintendent reports on the function for which he/she has responsibility, and asks for comment on proposed action over the next few weeks. There is some discussion of the board meeting scheduled for the next day, and the director confirms that necessary reports and other documents are ready. (Most material was circulated to trustees the week before.)

The director then meets with a trustee who is not happy with the board policy concerning community use of schools after hours. The director explains the background of the policy, and suggests various alternatives the trustee might pursue if she wishes to institute a review. He points out possible consequences of taking different approaches to the issue.

A working lunch follows, with the chairperson of the board. The two go over the agenda for tomorrow's board meeting. The director has already reviewed this, ensuring that sufficient time is available for each item, and that appropriate resources (reports, previous board minutes) are at hand. The item expected to cause the most controversy concerns ongoing negotiation concerning transfer of a secondary school from the public to the separate board as a result of enrolment changes following implementation of Bill 30 (extension of funding). The two discuss how best to handle this.

After lunch, the director has a telephone interview with the local newspaper, commenting on the negotiations with the counterpart local board around the proposed secondary school transfer. There is then half an hour for reading and commenting on the final version of a report prepared by the special education superintendent, on the implementation of special education procedures throughout the board, and proposed changes to some of these procedures. This work is interrupted by the arrival of a group of educational leaders from other countries who are touring Canada, looking at a variety of educational settings. They meet for twenty minutes, talking about the way this board has dealt with educational and social changes in the last ten years.

Late in the afternoon the superintendent of business arrives for a scheduled meeting around monitoring of budget guidelines. The director wishes to ensure that the new guidelines are being followed, and that they are working satisfactorily.

The last engagement for the day is a reception for a retiring principal, which is being held in a local secondary school. The director gathers together material for tomorrow's meeting with other directors in the regions, and leaves the office.

Following a quick dinner at home, the director is out again, attending the opening of a new general-purpose room in an elementary school. The director delivers a speech, and spends an hour following the ceremony talking informally with principals, staff, and parents from the community.

Superintendent of Business

This position is known by a plethora of titles including Superintendent of Finance and Administration, Superintendent of Business Management, Controller of Finance, and Superintendent of Business. The tasks to be performed, according to the job descriptions, demonstrate very little variation.

The incumbent in this position is delegated all responsibilities related to the business and financial affairs of the board. However, by reporting directly to the director, the business officer keeps the board fully informed about the financial health of the system. As with the role of director, the role of the Superintendent of Business involves much coordination, in this case specifically all non-academic services including transportation of students, legal matters, computers, food services, insurance, and purchasing.

With regard to planning, the incumbent usually forecasts enrolment projections, and assists in planning school construction, school renovation and alterations. (The exception is large boards with a Superintendent of Planning, usually an academic supervisory officer.) The purchase of sites and the disposal of buildings, land, and equipment are dealt with by this superintendent. The board expects to be apprised of forecast requirements in terms of accommodation, supplies and equipment and of anticipated resources for the future. Furthermore, the board looks to the incumbent as a key advisor in policy formation since the financial expertise resides in this position. While some of the larger boards have a Superintendent of Plant, most Superintendents of Business are responsible for all school facilities and their maintenance and use in after school hours.

This supervisory officer supervises all non-academic staff and is involved in the appointing and dismissal, the evaluation, and the professional development of these employees. In four of the sample boards, the incumbent is involved in contract negotiations for all staff.

Approximately one-half of the incumbents are assigned the responsibilities of treasurer to the board. In the other boards, the director has the responsibilities of both secretary and treasurer to the board.

In summary, the Superintendent of Business as the only non-academic superintendent in most boards (other

Manage and control finances.

Provide information to trustees about financial matters.

Prepare budgets and financial statements.

Monitor budget throughout year.

Resolve all issues around pupil transportation for the board.

Negotiate with ministry around capital grant requests.

Coordinate building of new schools to ensure schools open on time and within cost estimates.

Orientation of new trustees with regard to financing and planning.

Keep trustees informed about financial implications of policies they set.

Act as secretary to finance committee of board.

Responsible for physical plant.

Manage staff in business function.

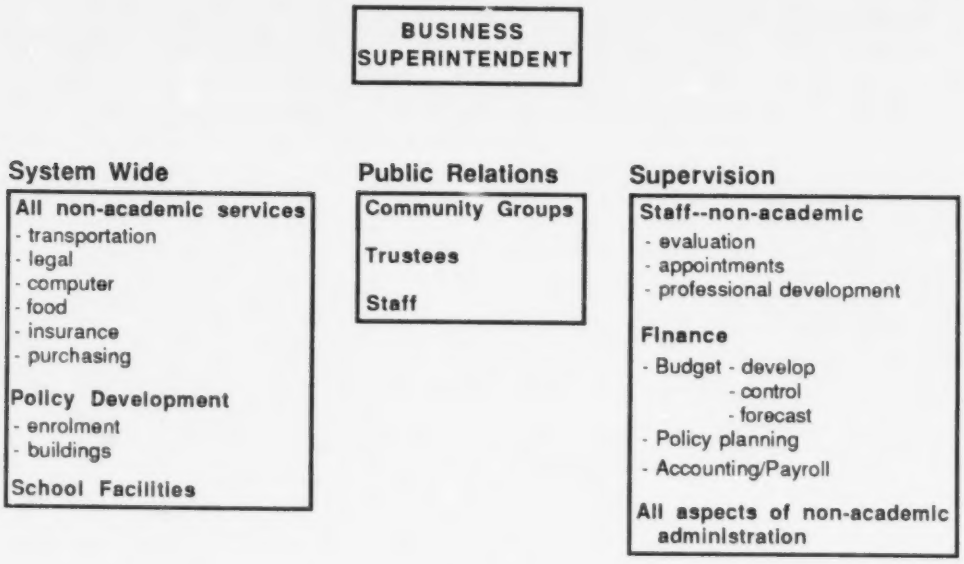
Conduct salary negotiations.

"The Budget": work with finance committee of board to develop budget. Review needs of system (salary estimates, numbers of staff), organize information, prepare estimates.

than the Superintendent of Plant) is the key figure in all business and financial matters in the board.

Figure 6-2 represents the job profile of a typical business supervisory officer.

Figure 6-2: Role of Business Supervisory Officer



The work day starts at 8:30 with a brief staff meeting, in which the superintendent reviews with staff all the work plans for the coming week. Some modifications in staff assignments are made to ensure that financial statements are ready when needed. The next task is gathering information for a trustee who had asked about budget figures.

Administrative Council meets from 9:30 to 11:30 in this board. The business superintendent sees his role here as providing all budget and financial information needed by the academic supervisory officers, to ensure that financial implications of decisions are not overlooked, and to continue to be aware that the overall purpose of the system is education of young people. In this meeting, he is looking for input concerning the development of a long-term financial plan.

There is time to continue working on the background material for the latest capital grant application to the ministry. Enrolment forecasts show an anticipated increase in enrolment due to new subdivisions, and a new school will be required. The business supervisory officer has been involved with municipal planning officials, with his counterpart from a neighbouring board, and with ministry officials.

Following lunch, the business superintendent meets with one of his staff to develop the cost implications of various salary increases (negotiations are going on, and these figures are required for the next session). Although he is not directly involved in negotiations, planning and helping to set board strategies is an important part of his role.

Several phone calls need to be returned. Most are principals who need information or advice about getting money for unanticipated needs, or to start a new program. Others are ministry officials needing to discuss the capital grant application.

In a mid-afternoon appointment with an insurance agent, negotiations concerning the board's public liability insurance continue. The premiums have become extremely high, and business officials from several boards have been meeting to discuss alternative ways of proceeding with the problem. They agree to meet again next week with further information.

Before leaving for the day, the business superintendent reviews the material for tomorrow's board meeting. As he leaves, he decides to take the insurance material home to see if he can make any more progress towards a solution.

Central Office Superintendents

The responsibilities of the Central Office Superintendent are characterized by system-wide, board-level tasks. The incumbent is less involved in the day-to-day operations of the schools. These senior superintendents usually report directly to the director (except in some large boards) and tend to be specialists rather than generalists. The functional areas include program and curriculum, special education, personnel, and operations. As with the other superintendencies, titles vary from board to board but the responsibilities within each role tend to be similar. A Superintendent of Personnel and a Superintendent of Human Resources perform the same duties.

Responsibilities and tasks for central office superintendents reflect the greatest variation from role to role, but there are strong similarities in general responsibilities. All central office superintendents are expected to coordinate and manage the departments under their jurisdiction. The incumbent is responsible for staffing the department from consultants to support staff. Evaluation and professional development of these personnel are responsibilities of the central office superintendent. In addition, the incumbents are expected to assist in the preparation and control of the departmental budget. Central office supervisory officers provide liaison with the Ministry of Education and with a variety of agencies and educational groups. As the expert in the area at the board, the incumbent is expected to advise the board in its policy formation.

While the responsibilities assigned at the central office level are very similar, differences may arise as to who is assigned a particular responsibility. For example, professional development can be the responsibility of the Superintendent of Program, the Superintendent of Personnel, or the Superintendent of Operations. Nonetheless, all boards expect that professional development will be provided to staff regardless of who is in charge.

Implement ministry and board policy in own function (e.g., develop, carry out and monitor plan for implementation of new curriculum guidelines).

Develop staffing policies and formulas, and implement these.

Administer collective agreements.

Informing and advising trustees about issues and decisions.

Deal with trustees: providing information, answering questions, advising, serving on board committees.

Staffing schools and supervising staff.

Performance review of all principals and vice-principals.

Curriculum development and review.

Coordinate IPRCs.

Providing support and resources to system.

The specific responsibilities of the Superintendents of Program (or Curriculum), Special Education, Personnel, and Operations are outlined in Figures 6-3 through 6-6. It should be noted that in many boards, special education is the responsibility of the Superintendent of Program. The roles of the superintendents are almost identical from board to board except in the case of the Superintendent of Operations. The responsibilities of this role seem to be dictated by the other roles established at a particular board. In other words, this role appears to be a catch-all of duties and thus, the chart of responsibilities of the Superintendent of Operations represents more a range of responsibilities given in the job descriptions than tasks performed by each incumbent. In other words, no one person would do all these duties; the position might involve staffing or planning for instance.

Because there are so many supervisory officers in this category, and their roles tend to be specialized, several profiles are presented.

Figure 6-3: Role of Central Supervisory Officer (Operations)

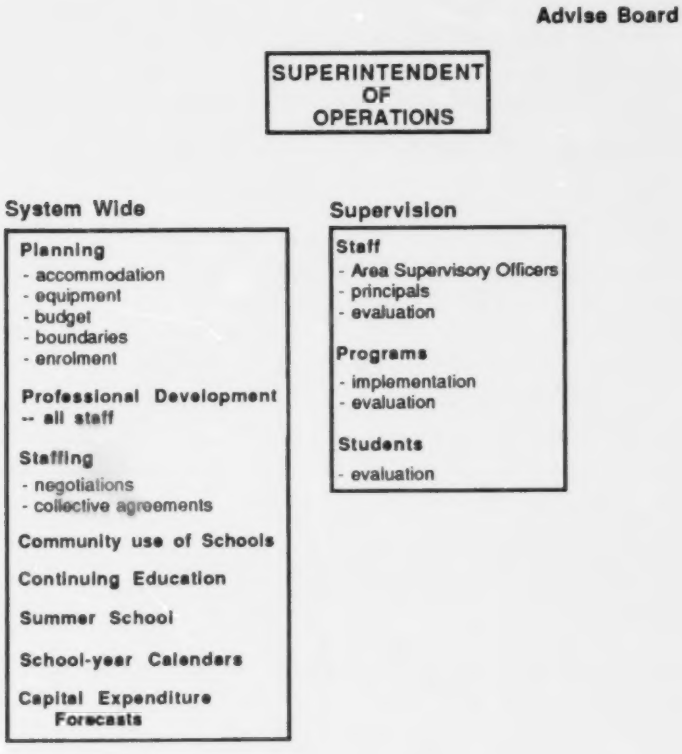


Figure 6-4: Role of Central Supervisory Officer (Special Education)

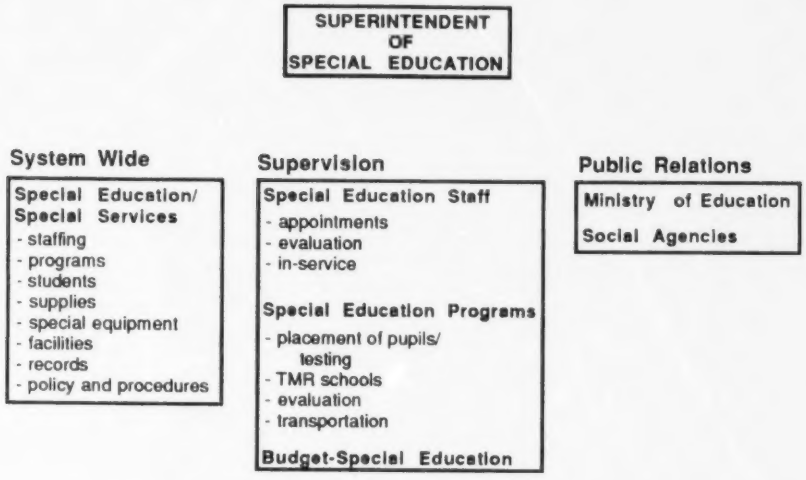


Figure 6-5: Role of Central Supervisory Officer (Personnel)

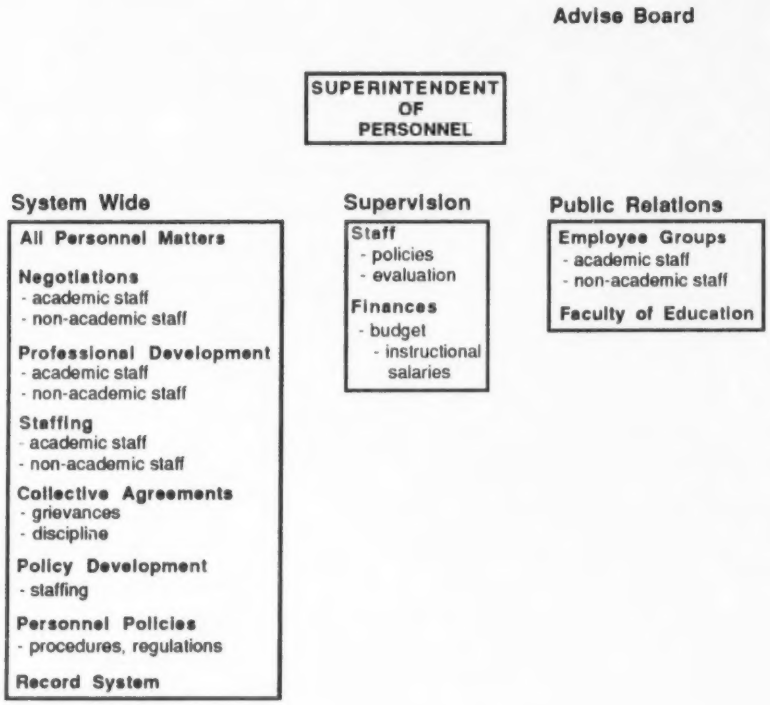
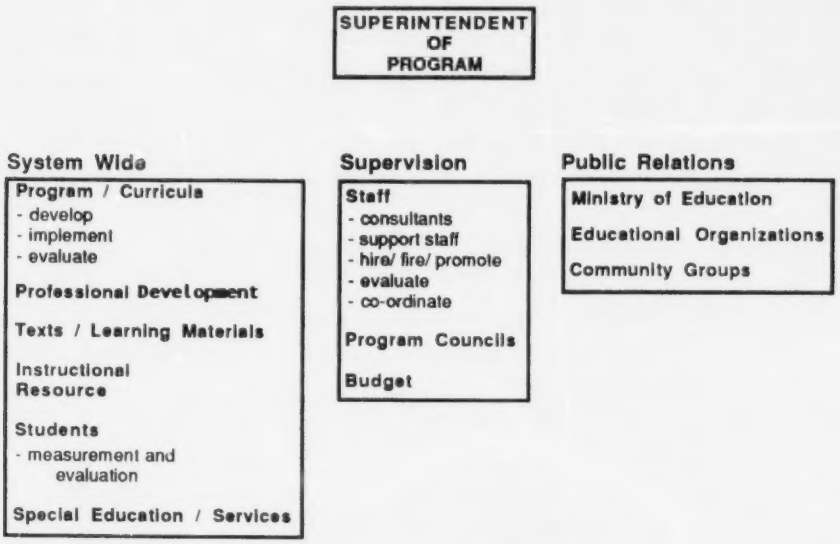


Figure 6-6: Role of Central Supervisory Officer (Program)



There is much variability here, depending on function. The example presented is a Superintendent of Curriculum.

The day begins with an hour spent working on a report to the board. This is the latest version of the curriculum implementation plan, developed after much consultation in schools, and throughout the system. It will be going to the board for approval in about two weeks.

A group of consultants and resource teachers meet with the superintendent for half an hour, to get her ideas, and ask for support for the development of a school-based inservice program for teachers.

The superintendent returns a phone call from the leader of a community group interested in starting a heritage language program in a local school. She explains the procedures they will need to follow, and offers to send them some written material. A meeting is set up for the next week. The superintendent makes a note to check whether, within the ethnic community asking for the program, there are any conflicts she should know about before going ahead with the meeting.

On her way out to lunch with two subject coordinators, she drops in on the personnel superintendent, to raise concerns about how proposed changes in the staffing models would affect programs. The two agree to meet the next day to discuss the problem further.

In the afternoon, time is spent in preparing for the meeting of the Board Program Committee the following day.

A colleague, an area superintendent, drops in to get expert advice concerning the best way to ensure that new board support documents are fully used in classrooms. There has been some concern expressed that curriculum is being developed, but not implemented as fully as it might be.

As she leaves her office at the end of the day, she gathers all the material she needs to continue working on the task force report concerning curriculum review, development, and implementation procedures. After dinner, she spends a solid two hours working on the report before packing away the papers.

Area Superintendent

As indicated earlier, area superintendents are given a variety of titles but very similar responsibilities. The area superintendent provides liaison between the board and the schools. The incumbent is involved in the day-to-day operation of an assigned family of schools but has no formal system-wide responsibilities. However, many do in fact have system duties. By coordinating all programs and services in the assigned schools, regional consistency in school organization, program opportunities, evaluation and reporting, and staff recruitment, area superintendents better ensure deployment and training. They may advise other superintendents, the director, and the board on policy matters and then interpret and implement board policy in their schools. Scarce resources of funds and staff are to be allocated within the family of schools by the area superintendent, subject to various constraints.

The area superintendent is expected to play a leadership role with the principals of the family of schools. It is expected that the incumbent will work closely with the principals to establish, implement, and evaluate school objectives, to prepare school budgets, and to organize the schools. This superintendent evaluates principals and vice-principals and monitors the principals in their evaluation of staff and students. The incumbent ensures the provision of professional development for all staff levels, and is frequently involved in leadership identification. Pursuant to the curriculum implementation process, the area superintendent is further responsible for evaluation of programs and curriculum.

With respect to the students, the area superintendent is responsible for discipline, promotion, admissions, transportation, safety, and accommodation. The incumbent is the first contact to the board for any problems which arise for which solutions cannot be found at the school level. The area superintendent is expected to play a key role in public relations with community groups, parents, trustees, and staff.

Figure 6-7 shows the job task profile of a typical area superintendent.

Get support from system (supervisory officers and other staff) and from trustees.

Try to balance needs of system with needs of schools.

Attend Administrative Council (usually).

Attend meetings of at least one board committee.

Ensure board policy followed in family of schools.

Tell central superintendents what is happening in local schools.

Carry out staffing changes (retirement, leaves, transfers).

Visit schools (anywhere from 10% of time to 60% of time) to develop supportive and comfortable relationship.

Visiting schools, advising principals, overseeing curriculum implementation (less time because of central demands).

Work with principals in staffing schools, setting up and maintaining school programs.

Plan and implement professional development for principals.

Supervise curriculum implementation (involves working with committees in schools).

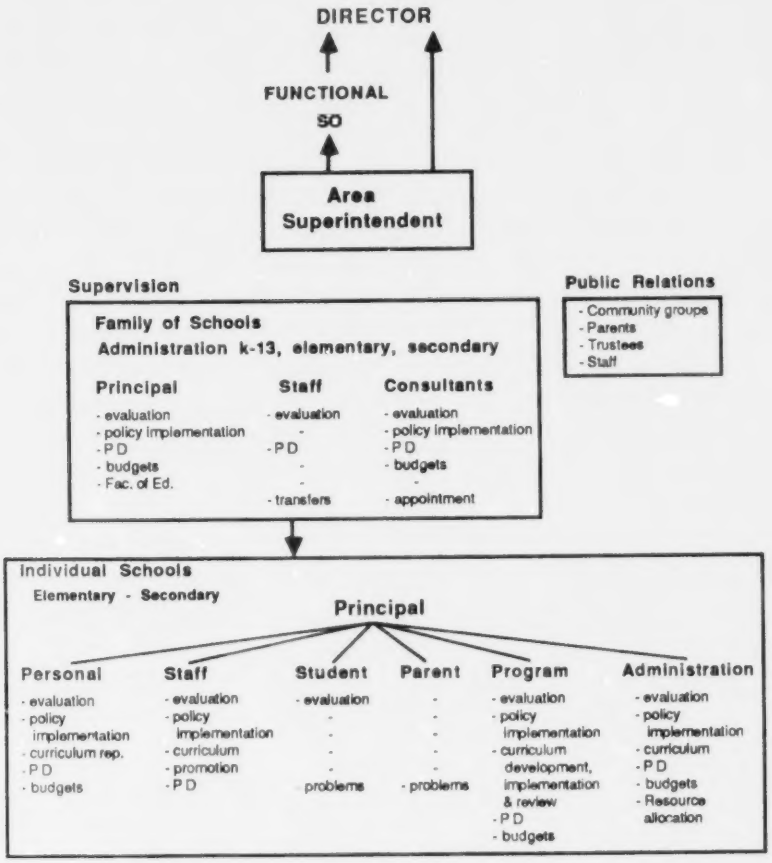
Attend IPRCs in schools.

Deal with parent calls.

Respond to parent concerns about school closings.

Speak to community groups and interpret board policy to them.

Figure 6-7: Area Superintendent Profile



The area superintendent starts the day early, leaving home at 7:30 a.m. to drive to a distant school for a regularly scheduled school visit. In the staff room, there is a chance to talk briefly to teachers as they arrive at the school and pick up coffee. In a meeting with the principal, objectives for the year are reviewed, and progress toward the stated objectives is assessed. Following further discussion of what has been happening at the school, the principal asks the superintendent's advice about how to approach a teacher about whom there have been parental complaints. The two agree on a plan of action, and the principal agrees to report back to the superintendent. The two also discuss upcoming professional development activities in the school, which are focusing on teaching math problem-solving skills.

The area superintendent then spends time in the classroom of a probationary teacher who is to be evaluated. During the previous week, the two met to talk about the classroom program in general, and in particular the activities of this week. The time this morning is spent observing, followed by time discussing what happened in the class (the principal covers the class for the teacher).

By this time, the area superintendent is running late for a meeting at the board offices, so drives quickly back. This is a meeting concerning setting up an Employee Assistance Program for all board employees. The committee has started negotiating with two service agencies, and is meeting to deal with concerns raised by staff about confidentiality and so on.

After a quick lunch, the area superintendent goes back to the office, where there are many phone calls, several from principals (concerning staff and student problems, the question of eligibility of a student whose primary residence is in another town, and requests for money to cover extra school trips and professional development expenses). Other phone calls are from parents, one upset because the public health nurse is not inspecting children for pediculosis, another questioning the competence of a teacher. The personnel superintendent drops in to discuss changes in staffing plans, and the impact on local schools.

Later in the afternoon, the area superintendent is off to attend an area IPRC, in which several students are considered for special placement. Following the session, one of the attending principals stays to discuss an upcoming night for parents, and asks the area superintendent to come to speak to the community.

In the evening, the area superintendent attends a lively meeting, called to discuss the proposed closing of a small neighbourhood school where the enrolment has continued to drop over a period of several years. Although the board has well-established procedures for consultation and decision making, the local community feels that not enough has been done to inform them, and to plan new school programs that would attract more students. The superintendent explains the board policy and procedures, listens to concerns, and tries to defuse the situation. A follow-up meeting is scheduled between the superintendent and a small local coordinating group.

Combined (Area and Central) Superintendent

This role is essentially a hybrid of the area superintendent role in that the incumbent performs the responsibilities of the area superintendent but also has some system-wide responsibilities. In the sample boards, this role is described in three of the small separate school boards, in one of the large separate school boards, and in four of the medium public school boards. With the exception of the large board, the other boards do not have functional academic, i.e., central office, superintendents. Therefore, area superintendents are expected to be responsible for some system-wide responsibilities.

What kinds of system-wide responsibilities come under the role of the area superintendent hybrid? It would appear that these are defined by the individual board according to its particular needs. Frequently, specifically defined responsibilities varied from board to board. However, several broad categories have been identified as follows:

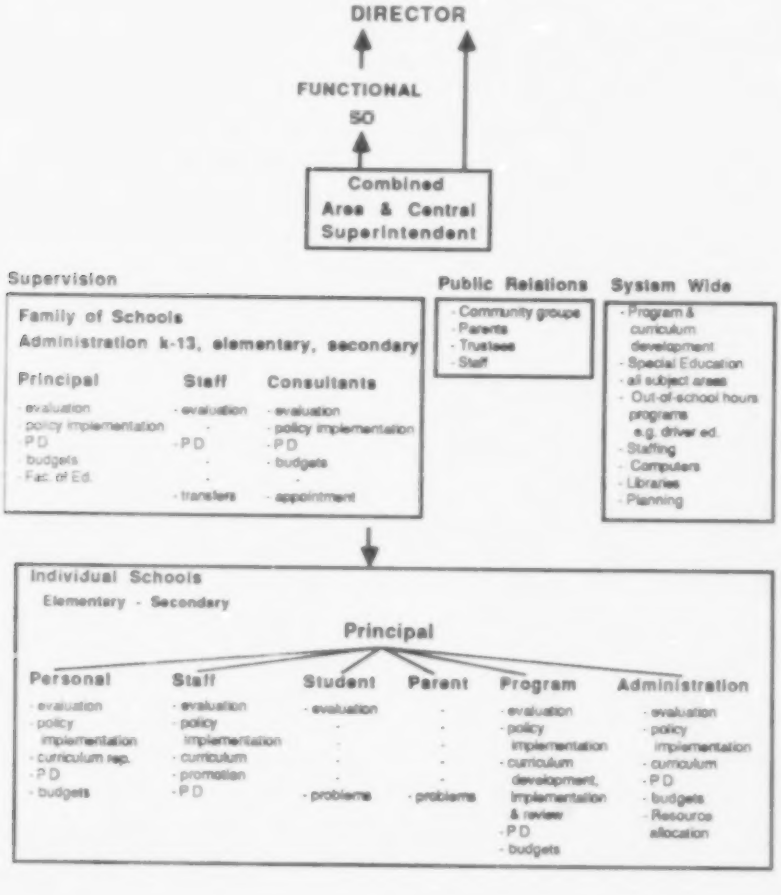
- Special Education
- Programs and Curriculum Development
  - French
  - All subject areas
- Out of School Hours Programs
  - Continuing education
  - Summer school
- Staffing

Tasks are the same as those given in the other two categories (Central and Area).

- Computers
- Libraries and Resource Centres
- Planning
- Public Relations

Figure 6-8 gives the task profile for a combined central and area supervisory officer.

Figure 6-8: Combined (Area and Central) Superintendent Profile



The example described is a superintendent who combines responsibility for a family of schools with responsibility for special education for the entire system.

The morning starts with a phone call from a principal about a difficult placement in special education, a child with a combination of difficulties. The school and the parents do not agree on an appropriate course of action. The superintendent reviews procedures, suggests alternative ways of proceeding, and suggests a preliminary meeting at the school of all those concerned.

Although she had planned to go to a school this morning, a call from the director resulted in cancelling the school visit. Apparently two trustees are opposed to details of the proposed policy and plans for setting up classes for the gifted at the elementary level. The superintendent has to meet with the director,

with the trustees, and with some of the staff involved in the program. Some of the opposition is overcome by efforts to clarify the proposed plan.

Following the meeting, she returns a phone call from parents upset about the prospect of having their learning disabled child attend a school several miles from their home. They want some provision made at the local school. The principal has met with them several times, as has the local area superintendent. They have suggested a call to the superintendent responsible for special education across the board. During the course of the telephone conversation, the parents agree to come to the board offices the next day for further discussion.

In the afternoon, there are three job interviews for a long-term occasional position teaching in a class for the behaviourally disturbed (the previous teacher had to leave suddenly due to illness). The principal of the school is also involved in these interviews.

When the interviews are finished, and a tentative decision made about hiring, the superintendent has a few minutes to make changes to the proposed plan for classes for the gifted (the one objected to earlier by trustees). She is then interrupted by another supervisory officer, needing quick information about the accepted program for a TR class in an intermediate level school.

As the day draws to a close, the superintendent hopes that her scheduled school visit for the following day can indeed take place as planned. There has not been time for follow-up on the school objectives set earlier that year.

In the evening, she is serving on a panel at a meeting of the Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities, talking about changes in board policies as a result of continued experience with implementing all the provisions of Bill 82.

Summary of the five key supervisory officer roles

The interviews revealed particular issues specific to each role. These are briefly recapitulated in this section.

Director: The director is generally seen, by trustees, other supervisory officers, and principals, as key to the system. As coordinator of board functions, bringing together the political and educational issues, the director sets the framework for how decisions are made and problems approached. Directors, unlike other supervisory officials, are directly responsible to the trustees. In smaller communities, directors feel they are particularly visible, representing the board and the system in all aspects of their lives.

Business supervisory officer: The role of business supervisory officer, as indicated above, is relatively distinct from that of the academic supervisory officers. Responsibilities are usually clear, and the job tends to proceed in a regular, cyclical fashion throughout the year. Business officials usually handle negotiations with the Ministry of Education concerning capital grants. As noted, those in small and medium boards often take responsibility for functions such as salary negotiations that would be assigned to a personnel superintendent in a larger board. In larger boards, where the responsibilities are more strictly financial and business, there may be several business supervisory officer positions, each one highly specialized.

Central supervisory officer: The roles of central supervisory officer varied more among themselves than any other role. This is primarily because many are specialist roles (personnel, curriculum, planning), and because the situation differs depending on board size. In one large board, there were a large number of

assistant superintendents of curriculum, whose job duties were more similar to what in other boards would be curriculum coordinators than they were to the usual supervisory officer role. For instance, they did not have line authority, acting more in an advisory capacity to resource teachers and other staff, with responsibilities for curriculum development and provision of support, but were not responsible for curriculum implementation or for staff. In our sample, there were 11 interviews with the assistant superintendents of curriculum in this board. Because these positions were so anomalous (and in fact were to some extent being replaced by temporary secondments), comments and conclusions in the analysis about the role of central supervisory officer do not apply to these positions.

Much of the role of central supervisory officer involves policy development, in that they are charged with the task of preparing reports for trustees. Particularly in larger boards, interviewees spent a great deal of time in committee meetings, often set up in response to trustee inquiries and requests, developing possible policy positions that would then be presented to trustees for decisions.

Area supervisory officer: The role of area supervisory officer was often seen as liaison or buffer or link between the central office (the system) on the one hand, and the schools on the other hand. Incumbents tried with varying levels of success to have "a foot in both camps", and an important part of the job was helping each group to see the point of view of the other. In most boards, the area superintendent is the first step on the ladder, the entry-level supervisory officer job, from which one could be promoted to a central position. (This is not always the case, however, because in boards with a "flat" structure, people may be moved in and out of the field.) From the interviews, it appears that area superintendents often perceive themselves as having limited input into central decision-making and policy development, yet are then expected to implement these decisions and policies in the field. Whether or not the area superintendent has control over a substantial area budget is an important factor in determining the significance of the role; an area superintendent who can support a principal with money for an innovative program has more impact than one who can only transmit requests to central office.

Combined supervisory officer: The combination of roles, with features of both area and central positions, has supervisory officers involved in both system-wide functional tasks (special education, or planning) as well as responsibility for groups of schools. In practice, the functional tasks often squeezed out visits to the schools.

Further observations on tasks and responsibilities

Some additional observations, based on interview responses, are important for drawing conclusions about tasks and responsibilities. These concern *differences in how the role is experienced in different types of boards, lines of accountability, the effects of legislation (particularly Bill 30)*, and *routine administrative work*.

Perceptions of role differences: As indicated at the beginning of the chapter, supervisory officers perceive the job as being quite different depending on such variables as geographic region, board size, or whether the board is public or separate. In other words, being a curriculum superintendent in the north is seen as quite different from being a curriculum superintendent in the south. Development of the task profiles, however, revealed few significant differences in tasks or responsibilities in different boards. How can this discrepancy be explained? The most plausible answer is that there are aspects of the work that have great immediacy for the incumbent, yet are not the central focus of the job. Factors such as travel time and resources available in the board do not seem to affect the main tasks that are done, but they certainly affect how such tasks are carried out, and the factors that must be taken into account when deciding how to implement curriculum guidelines for instance, or organize professional development. Area superintendents all make school visits; they all evaluate principals and probationary teachers,

organize professional development for staff, and provide advice for principals when problems arise. In small northern boards, such tasks are complicated by the vast distances, in that schools are isolated, travel is time-consuming, and it is difficult to make resources available to school staff. In large urban boards, on the other hand, the same tasks may be complicated by confusion about who is responsible, or by lack of coordination between central office and area-based staff. In spite of such factors, which suggest that supervisory officers *feel* very different in different places, our respondents described their work in ways that were remarkably similar across the 25 boards.

Lines of accountability: The interview data pointed to considerable overlapping of responsibilities or blurring of lines of accountability, either among several central supervisory officers, or between supervisory officers in the central office and those in the field. This is a problem found particularly in very large boards, and in those of changing size. It was less commonly reported in smaller boards with a stable organizational structure. Since overlapping and ambiguity were mentioned both in boards with declining enrolment, and those that are expanding, perhaps it is because job responsibilities and roles have to be shifted to meet changing needs. Both expanding and declining boards tend to change organizational structures; at least one expanding board had recently created the position of Associate Director to relieve the Director of some of his duties, while declining boards often flattened the structure, and eliminated some supervisory officer positions. In these changing circumstances, it is not always clear to what extent the issue is a genuine confusion about responsibilities, and to what extent it is really a territorial dispute.

In the two largest boards in our sample (both Large 1 city boards), lines of accountability and responsibility between central office and areas are perceived as particularly unclear, reportedly because of the large size, the way regions were geographically based, and the lack of communication between the central office and the field. Area supervisory officers frequently expressed resentment at being held responsible for implementation of policies that had been formulated centrally, with little awareness of the field situation. They felt such central directives often encroached on their responsibility to manage the area based on area needs.

It is interesting to note that the problems of overlapping and blurring of responsibilities were less acute for business officials, whose responsibilities are perceived as more clearly defined. As was pointed out by the respondents, the business supervisory officers have qualifications and skills that are different from those of other supervisory officers, and their functions are more easily distinguished. However, responsibility for financial and budgetary issues outside the scope of the business function can be unclear, for instance, whether a superintendent has the authority to release funds for a particular purpose.

Effects of Bill 30: A factor affecting the separate school boards in particular is the extension of funding to Roman Catholic secondary schools. Affected boards are grappling with the host of logistic issues produced by the introduction of legislation, more specifically, staffing, enrolment, developing secondary programs, funding, etc. Although such problems were predominantly mentioned by interviewees in separate boards, those in public boards also report dealing with the complementary side of the issues. Public boards are concerned about newly redundant secondary school teachers, possible transfer or closing of secondary schools, and difficulties created by reduced funding.

Routine administration: Virtually all supervisory officers appear to be involved in administrative functions; however, this was not always specifically mentioned when tasks were described. Perhaps such factors were considered routine and *were assumed* to be part of the role of any executive in a management function.

Summary of "Task Profile" Data

Examination of the profiles and schematic representations of the roles (Figures 6-1 through 6-8) suggests several conclusions:

- Job descriptions, although not complete, describe the responsibilities of supervisory officers in a manner corresponding to the descriptions given by the incumbents of what they actually do.
- Supervisory officer positions can be grouped into five general role categories, each somewhat distinct in its duties: *director, business, central, area,* and *combined*.
- Within each of these five role categories, tasks and responsibilities are similar in different boards. In other words, the tasks carried out by a director or an area supervisory officer are very much the same regardless of the board in which they serve. There is some variation due to board size, but region and whether the system is public or separate do not seem to be related to differences in responsibilities, or in the kind of task carried out. We recognize that this conclusion contradicts the views of many incumbents, who perceive the jobs as quite different "in the north", or "in this board". Such perceptions are attributed to the immediacy and pervasiveness of factors such as the amount of time spent travelling between schools, the ease of obtaining resources, and the formal and informal policies of boards. When attention is focused on the actual tasks and responsibilities, and the nature of the work performed, supervisory officer positions across Ontario would seem to be more similar to each other than conventional wisdom would have us believe.

6.2.3. Action/content analysis

The next stage of the analysis entailed a closer examination of the tasks in the role clusters. Up to this point, we have concluded that the work of supervisory officers does not differ significantly based on regional, public/separate, or even greatly with size, but there are distinctive task patterns associated with each of the five roles. In this section, we will look more closely at these tasks, to determine whether there are underlying similarities in the work of different supervisory officer roles.

The tasks in the role clusters can be seen as involving two dimensions; the *action itself* and the *focus or content of the action*. For instance, formulating a curriculum implementation plan involves "formulating" in the area of "curriculum", while negotiating a salary settlement involves "negotiating" in the area of "personnel". Examples of *actions* would be "review", "evaluate", "manage", "plan", "advise" and "negotiate", while example of *content* would be "financial matters", "political issues", "curriculum", "personnel" or "school supervision". We can ask, "What do supervisory officers do?" and "Concerning what content or area do they carry out such action?".

Actions

Actions will be examined first. Although the distinction is not always easy to make, it is possible to distinguish between *actions* involving line authority (managing, supervising, ensuring compliance, evaluating), or a staff role (consulting, advising, liaising, supporting). There are also *actions* that could involve either line or staff roles (negotiating, planning, implementing or coordinating). When the tasks are analysed in this way, the *actions* would represent *skills* of the supervisory officer, and the *focus or content* would represent *bodies of knowledge*.

What does this approach mean in practice, and how does it help illuminate the role of the supervisory officer? As shown by the following descriptions, by breaking down supervisory officer tasks into component features, such an approach can begin to identify the important skills used by supervisory officers in their jobs.

Some of the key *actions* are described below:

- *Review or evaluate*: directing attention to past actions, making judgements concerning level of performance, and indicating possible improvements.
- *Advise or support*: may involve provision of information, advice, resources.
- *Develop or formulate*: may be done alone or with others. Might be developing proposals, possible policies, implications of policies.
- *Coordinate*: be aware of and manage all aspects of a function, or different schools, or in the case of a director, all aspects of a complex system.
- *Ensure compliance*: monitor or manage implementation of a policy or plan. May be done as "coach" or as "inspector" (perhaps incompatible roles).
- *Solve problems*: resolve problems that come up in course of work. May be ones supervisory officer notices, or ones that are brought to his/her attention by others. May often be "heading off" problems, that is, recognizing potential problems and acting before situation becomes difficult.
- *Plan or forecast*: on basis of current information, forecast future developments, and set out general or specific objectives or plans

Content

The *content or focus* of the actions refers to the sphere in which the action is being carried out. The incumbent has responsibilities in a certain area of the board's operations, and particular bodies of knowledge are brought to bear on the issues. As might be expected, the content or focus area varies with role, but the key *areas of content or focus* include the following:

- *Curriculum and Program* (special education is a particular aspect of this).
- *Personnel* (staffing, collective agreements).
- *Finance* (budgets, financial priorities).
- *Professional Development* (for principals and teachers).
- *Physical facilities* for learning (new schools, additions, plant maintenance).

Matrices were formulated for supervisory officer roles, in which the actions were plotted against the content areas. A general matrix (almost a "master job description") is presented in Table 6-2, with each cell representing a typical task or responsibility. The representation of the job in such a matrix follows the methodology suggested by Miklos (1965), who developed a similar depiction for the role of principal. In Table 6-2, examples are given of typical tasks from the range of supervisory officer roles. The examples are drawn from the interviews.

Inspection of Table 6-2 suggests that supervisory officer tasks cover very different content areas, but the actions seem similar, varying mainly in their focus. To test this idea further, similar action-content matrices were developed for each of the five key roles (*director*, *business*, *central*, *area*, and *combined*). These matrices are not presented here, because comparison showed that although the *content or focus* of the work varied systematically with the role, the *actions* themselves did not. There was a common core of actions that accounted for much of the supervisory officer work, *across different role categories*. The key actions include "review and evaluate", "advise and support", "develop and formulate", "plan and forecast" and "ensure compliance" (which often subsumes "implement"). "Solving problems" in the personnel function, for instance, involves different situations from those in the business function, but the same problem-solving skills are called upon. Similarly, "advising and supporting" may be directed toward trustees or toward principals, but what is involved in the advising and supporting is likely to be very similar. In other words, tasks may appear to be quite different because they are in different fields of specialization (different content areas), but close examination of what is done indicates that the tasks are

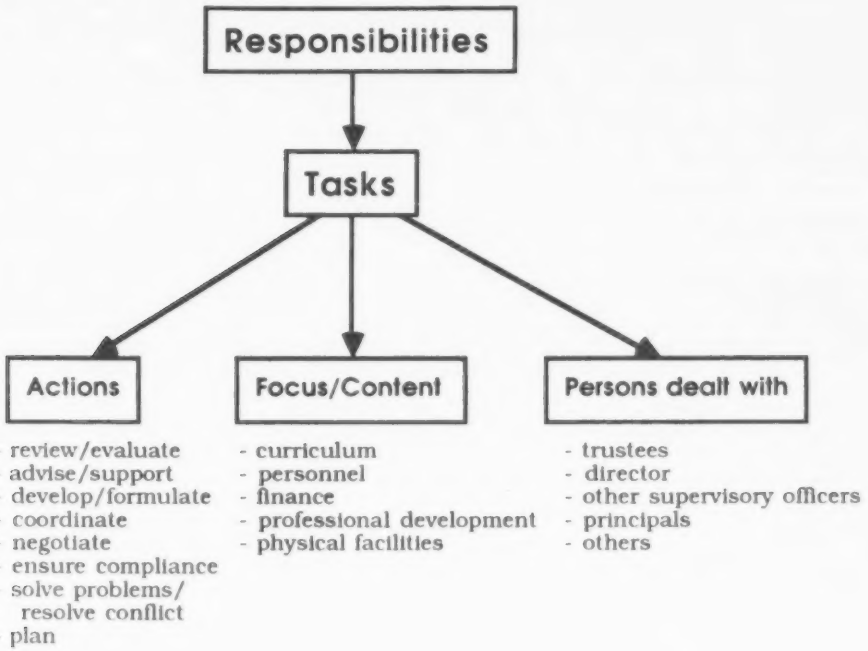
Table 6-2: Matrix of Actions and Content in Supervisory Officer Tasks

Focus or Content	Curriculum	Personnel	Finance	Professional Development	Physical Facilities
Action					
Review/evaluate	Participate in ministry review of primary or junior programs	Review and evaluate policies to avoid redundancy	Evaluate school and department budgets	Evaluate PD needs of teachers and principals	In declining system, review continuing existence of small schools
Advise/support	Meet with consultants to help them plan. Provide resources.	Secretary to trustees' Personnel Committee	Advise trustees on budgetary implications of proposed policies	Advise principals on school PD plans and progress	Work with community waiting for a new school.
Develop/formulate	Develop curriculum implementation plans. Formulate board curriculum policies for board approval.	Develop personnel policies to accommodate affirmative action guidelines.	Develop procedures for budget preparation.	Develop PD policy for system, write rationale	Work with architect in design of school addition.
Coordinate	Coordinate development of curriculum materials.	Coordinate personnel policies to ensure consistency in application.	Coordinate budget preparation process across entire system.	Coordinate PD progress to be sure there are no gaps.	Oversee construction to ensure school is ready in September.
Negotiate		Negotiate with Teacher's Federation for salary settlement.	Ongoing negotiation with functions on budget with allocations.		Negotiate with counterpart (separate/public) board re: surplus building.
Ensure compliance	Responsible for ensuring that new curriculum is implemented. Ensure all Sp. Ed. identification procedures are consistent with legislation, and are followed.	Implementation of all collective agreements. Application of staffing models.	Monitoring of budget guidelines.	Ensure that all teachers have access to PD.	Ensure that buildings meet all requirements for health and safety.
Solve problems	Deal with trustee objections to new ministry guidelines.	Deal with individual personnel problems (leave, personal problems, etc.).	Work with other supervisory officers to resolve competing claims for financial resources.	Try to find suitable space and resources for PD programs.	Deal with community protesting closing of school.
Plan	Develop curriculum implementation plans.	Forecast staff needs, determine how to meet these needs.	Set priorities, develop long-term spending estimates.	Develop and administer leadership identification programs.	Develop enrolment forecasts and plans to accommodate changes.

more similar than may first appear. Such a finding has significant implications for training and selection: if supervisory officers are involved in this common core of tasks, a common set of skills could be identified.

Figure 6-9 provides an overview of what, based on interview responses concerning tasks and responsibilities, are the significant elements in the work of supervisory officers. The "persons dealt with" aspect is discussed in the following section.

Figure 6-9: Significant Elements in Work of Supervisory Officers



6.3. Interactions with people

When asked to describe the main responsibilities and tasks of the job, our respondents almost invariably described work that involved other people. *Interacting with others is a key feature of the role, and indeed its importance would be difficult to overstate.* For most supervisory officer jobs, the people dealt with *are* in fact the job. In other words, the discussing, negotiating, coordinating, evaluating, meeting would be meaningless without the other people involved, and the system administered by supervisory offices *is* a system of people. Very few tasks are done alone, the notable exception being writing reports. However, even here, writing is only one step; data must be gathered from people in the system, and persuading others to accept the conclusions or recommendations of the report is the final test of effectiveness.

The importance of establishing and maintaining contact with a network of people is a well-known feature of all types of managerial work (Mintzberg, 1973), and was noted by McLeod (1980) in his study of Ontario directors of education.

6.3.1. Groups and persons

Virtually all supervisory officers deal with the trustees, the director, other supervisory officers, and with principals (this last category mentioned particularly by area or combined supervisory officers). In addition to these four main groups, there are also others less frequently named: support staff (consultants, coordinators, resource teachers, and psychological staff), teachers and external groups. External groups include parents, community groups, the press, the Ministry of Education, social agencies and supervisory officers in other boards (particularly for directors).

The difficulty of describing, quantifying, and analysing the network of contacts is illustrated in the following excerpt from an interview with a central supervisory officer with responsibility for special education, in a Large 2 board:

> Everyone recognizes they can make contact; they just pick up the phone. The provincial superintendents I meet with four times a year. I meet with the director frequently. The director meets with us formally every Monday.....There is a clear network among all the supervisory officers, a certain synergy. Every month I meet with a liaison from each principal panel, and I speak to the two groups from time to time. I meet with families of schools at their invitation. I also meet with people on the trustee committees, and committees on ESL, the gifted, and the special education review. The trustees contact me individually about reports, and also contact me directly with individual cases, looking for advice, giving advice. This is problem-solving, and drawing implications for future cases. I also meet with parent groups.

The quantity and variety of data concerning "dealing with others" is formidable. With regard to interactions with the full range of persons and groups mentioned above, interviewees spoke of the frequency of both formal and informal meetings, the purposes or reasons for conversations, and the difficulties involved in any relationships. *The overwhelming evidence of such data is that dealing with others, primarily in a problem-solving capacity, is the most striking feature of a supervisory officer's role.* Area superintendents, for instance, report receiving ten or twelve phone calls a day from principals, asking for information and advice, or reporting on school problems. Much of the interpersonal contact is unpredictable, and described as being on an "ad hoc" basis. The pace is sometimes frantic, sometimes slow. Seen as crucial in keeping track of the system are the fleeting, "as needed" encounters throughout the day. It is here that many supervisory officers report getting the most valuable information about what is happening in the board and beyond.

Regularly scheduled meetings, of course, are an important and time-consuming part of the work of supervisory officers. A great deal of time and energy seems to be spent in committee meetings aimed at policy development and implementation. Involvement here seems to be central to the role. It was noted, however, that this time-consuming aspect of the job was often reported to detract from overall success in the supervisory role, in that excessive committee work removes the individual from the *educational* component of the role. (This was particularly reported by area superintendents.)

The salient points concerning dealing with each of the four key groups mentioned by the interviewees are summarized below:

- *Trustees:* Supervisory officers in each of the roles differed in the frequency and nature of their interactions with trustees.
  - Directors, in their role as secretary to the board, reported being in constant interaction with trustees, most often with the chairperson of the board. The traditional notion that the board makes policy, while administrators implement it, is not really tenable, because it is oversimplified. The director makes suggestions, develops the policy implications of trustee ideas, and often shapes trustee views. The relationship between trustees and directors is ideally one of cooperation, but reality often falls short of this ideal. The director has considerable control over how the board will communicate with the rest of the system; in some boards, all trustee-supervisory officer communication is to be channeled through the director, while in most boards this is not the case.

    Other supervisory officers varied in the extent to which they dealt with trustees, depending not only on the way trustee-administration communication is structured, but also on the supervisory officer role.
  - Business officers usually serve as secretary to the finance committee of the board, and thus have ongoing contact with trustees. They develop cost implications of various policies, and report on monitoring of financial and budgetary matters. They appear to vary in the extent to which they influence the board in financial matters. In large boards

with more than one business supervisory officer, not all would deal directly with trustees.

- Central supervisory officers report on their own functions, answer questions, and, especially in larger boards, frequently prepare reports on various issues. They often develop alternative plans in response to trustee requests, plans which may or may not be in agreement with their own judgement about what issues take priority and how these should be dealt with. Central supervisory officers report a wide range in the frequency of their contacts with trustees; some report daily exchanges, others talk to trustees no more than once a month.

- Area superintendents would deal with trustees around local school issues, usually in the context of the trustee wanting a problem to be resolved. Trustees seem to prefer to call the local superintendent directly to get information.

- *Director:* For many supervisory officers, the director is the key person with whom they interact, on both a formal and an informal basis. The director sets the tone of the system, and communicates a vision of what the goals are. Frequency of contact is a function of board size and supervisory officer role. In small and medium boards, supervisory officers usually meet with the director on a regular basis, in both formal and informal settings. In the larger boards, particularly those with several supervisory officer levels, this is not the case. The director usually tries to remain accessible, but area and assistant superintendents for instance would deal more with their immediate superiors, or perhaps with an associate or assistant director, and only rarely have any contact with the director. In such boards, it is the senior superintendents and the associate and assistant directors who deal with the director, and then communicate policies and ideas through the system.

- *Other supervisory officers:* Contact with other supervisory officers is on a regular, almost continuous basis in many boards, particularly within the central office. Discussion of policy, communication of information, building and maintaining a supportive team, arguing and negotiating over issues -- all these and more are involved in supervisory officer dealings.

- *Principals:* For directors, dealing with principals is usually, except in very small boards, primarily through the principals' associations. There are frequent meetings with representatives to share information and to head off and solve problems. Directors also speak to groups of principals, to share goals, hear problems and answer questions. Business officials deal frequently with principals, for the most part around requests about resources and financial matters.

  Central supervisory officers vary most in the extent to which they deal with principals; some virtually never, others, such as personnel or curriculum superintendents, may deal with them regularly on a range of issues to do with implementation of collective agreements, or review of program.

  Area and combined supervisory officers usually have daily contact with principals in their families of schools, both by telephone and in person. Either party might initiate the contact, in which any of the issues related to system-school liaison, or to implementation of board policies might be discussed.

In addition to these main groups, there are other groups, perhaps equally important in the system, but less frequently dealt with by supervisory officers, and having less impact on the supervisory officer role. These include teachers, support personnel (such as consultants and resource teachers), office staff, parent and community groups, and the media. It is directors and senior central supervisory officers who most frequently talk to the media, although one director "left all that to trustees". Media encounters are considered very important when they occur, because of their impact on shaping public and community perception of the board.

Throughout the discussion of "interactions with others", it is important to note that such interactions are not to be considered as ends in themselves, but as vehicles for accomplishing tasks. In other words, "being good with people" is not the issue; supervisory officers deal with others to resolve

conflict, to persuade trustees to adopt a certain policy, to negotiate a satisfactory salary settlement, or to assure parents that the problems in the local school are being satisfactorily resolved. Dealing with others is the most important part of the job, because it is instrumental in getting the job done.

Groups affecting time: Respondents were asked to identify which persons or groups had "the greatest impact on how you spend your time". Many supervisory officers suggested this varied, depending on what was happening in their work lives, but in general, trustees, the director, and other supervisory officers were most frequently mentioned. The figures are given in Table 6-3.

Table 6-3: Groups Reported as Having Greatest Impact

Group	Per cent mentioning*
Trustees	41%
Director	20%
Other supervisory officers	39%
Principals	27%
Teachers	5%
Own office staff	5%
Others	12%

* *Percentages total more than 100 per cent, as some respondents mentioned more than one group.*

Although "director" was mentioned by only 20 per cent, such a figure probably underestimates the director's impact. Respondents commonly noted that although the director rarely made a direct request, when such a request came, it took first priority.

6.3.2. Expectations of others

There are three sources of data for this topic: the views of the supervisory officers themselves concerning the expectations of others and how realistic these expectations are, the stated expectations of the trustees vis-à-vis directors and other supervisory officers, and also the views of the principals in the system. As noted earlier, in each sample board, interviews were conducted with the presidents of the principals' associations. Principals were asked what they saw as important features of the roles of director, central supervisory officer, and area supervisory officer.

The majority (71 per cent) of supervisory officers felt that the expectations of others were realistic. Those who felt expectations were not realistic pointed to conflicting expectations, and felt others expect too much of them. Parents and community groups, it was reported, often overestimate the power of supervisory officers, and expect more than the supervisory officer can deliver. In general, the more a person or group knew about the role, the more realistic the expectations were.

Expectations people have of the role of director: The expectations of principals concerning the director could be summed up in the words of one respondent: "The director should be a director", in other words, should provide leadership and direction for the entire system. Virtually all principals talked about importance of the director as the liaison between the trustees and the system, and expected the director to represent their interests to the board. They expect the director to anticipate the needs of the system, and to

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organize resources to meet these needs. The importance of symbolic or ceremonial leadership was mentioned by a number of principals, in the sense of the director making himself or herself visible in the system, attending various functions in the role of leader.

Trustees were in considerable agreement about what they expected of the director. The director had the "ultimate responsibility for the system", and was expected to set goals, ensure that board and ministry policy was carried out and set the framework for staff working together. These duties involved administration of all aspects of the system, including financial policies and collective agreements. They were less likely than principals to stress the importance of the director actually "directing", presumably because they felt they shared that responsibility. However, they saw the director as key to the system, as the link between the trustees on the one hand, and the teachers, parents, students, community, and government on the other.

Trustees were also clear what they expected of the director vis-à-vis trustees themselves. The responses fell into several identifiable clusters:

- *Information and guidance*: They want good and complete information from the director, but even more they want advice, recommendations, and direction. This expectation seems to be paramount, and was expressed by virtually all trustees we interviewed. One trustee suggested a further refinement, the director "getting trustees to recognize the implications of their own ideas". In other words, the director is to protect trustees from the unanticipated consequences of their own actions.
- *Political acumen*: This factor is partially covered by the "information and guidance" item above, in that trustees assume the director will inform them of the *political* consequences of the policies they suggest, but it involves more than just this. As one trustee put it, "I expect the director to anticipate moves on the part of various trustees and others in the system, and have a motion in mind that would satisfy the various elements."
- *Availability*: Trustees expect the director to be available to them (the extreme position stated was that the director should be available "day or night, seven days a week"). They want the director to be approachable, and to be supportive of trustees.
- *Implementation of policy*: As would be anticipated, trustees expect the director to implement the decisions of the board. A stronger statement was that the director remember that "he is not running the board".
- *Public relations*: Trustees expect the director to represent the board, and to do public relations work in the community on its behalf.
- *Integrity*: Trustees expect "total honesty and openness", and want to be assured the director "will not be devious".

Trustees in small boards felt the director should maintain a high profile and be known in the community, an expectation not mentioned in the larger boards.

Expectations of other supervisory officers: Principals were asked their expectations of both central and area supervisory officers, but it is interesting to note that most principals seem to think first of area supervisory officers, presumably because these are the people they are most likely to deal with in their daily working lives. Principals expect area supervisory officers to keep them aware of new directions and issues emanating from the board and from the central office, and to provide resources and support. They also expect area superintendents to act as "buffers" between the trustees and the schools, should any problems arise.

Chairpersons of the board expect area supervisory officers to be "politically sensitive and keep local trustees informed". They are expected to run the local schools effectively. They are not expected to get involved in political issues at the board level, but are expected to be aware of the political issues, and to state the board's position in a positive manner when communicating with teachers, parents, and the community.

Central supervisory officers tend to deal less directly with principals, which influences the expectations principals have of the role. In general, they expect central supervisory officers to provide information concerning their own particular functions, and also to be able to answer any questions principals may have.

Trustees expect central supervisory officers to ensure that their own functions are operating effectively, to provide information on request, to act as secretary to various board committees, and to keep trustees well informed about potential difficulties.

6.4. Immediate context of the work

6.4.1. Time aspects

Hours per week and evenings per week

Supervisory officers were asked to indicate how many hours they usually worked, and also how many evening meetings they usually attended each week. The median work week reported was 50 hours (half the respondents reported 50 hours or less, while half reported more than 50 hours). The mean number of evening meetings per week was 2. In general, directors report working the highest number of hours (approximately 60-65 hours per week), while business supervisory officers report a shorter work week (approximately 44-46 hours). Business officials also report only one evening meeting per week, less than other categories. Otherwise, there are no significant differences related to role, and there are no consistent worktime differences related to board size.

Interviewees often expressed concern about what they perceived as excessively long hours. Based on the interviews, their reference groups are principals and teachers, rather than other administrators. Although much of the job is managerial, those interviewed do not compare their working hours to those of other managers or to professionals. The only exception to this, the business officials, did not see themselves working longer than those in non-educational settings.

{Pacing of work

The average numbers as reported above give an incomplete picture of the work week. The way in which the work is paced is equally significant. A high degree of variation is reported, not only among the supervisory officers interviewed (who reported from 35 to 100 hours per week), but also for the same person within the same job. What can be termed the "flow of the year" also has an effect on workload. Principal evaluations, objective setting, staffing plans, salary negotiations, transfers -- all these tasks are tied to the pattern of the school year. A person's workload also varies depending on the particular issues facing the board. A threatened or actual strike for instance, would dramatically increase supervisory officer work time, as would a sudden change in policy, or a "hot" issue such as school closings. The high degree of variation often creates difficulties for people; one director expressed a wish to "even out the workload, to get rid of the bulges".

The number of meetings, whether they be held in the evening or during the day, also varies considerably, not only among interviewees, but for the same person depending on what is happening within the board. One supervisory officer, for instance, reported that in November of 1985, "a high month", he attended 88 meetings. Interviewees reported some weeks when they were out every night attending meetings, while these periods might be followed by weeks with only one evening meeting.

These aspects of the work of supervisory officers have been noted in other studies, for instance, that of McLeod and Brophy (McLeod, 1980). They commented on the pace of the work, the patterns of activity, and the balance between activity and passivity. Although we did not observe supervisory officers directly in the way that McLeod and Brophy observed CEOs (directors), what we learned in interviews would support their conclusions. Many supervisory officer jobs are an odd balance of frenetic activity followed by long hours sitting in meetings, be they board, committee or community meetings. In much of the work of supervisory officers, interruptions are common, resulting in the incumbent having to constantly shift attention from one subject to another, and from one person or group to another.

6.4.2. Discretionary authority

Supervisory officers were asked how much discretionary authority they had, and were asked to indicate the extent to which they felt constrained as they went about their work. Interview data for this item reveal some interesting features. As a starting point, respondents were categorized as "feels constrained" or "feels free". Taken at face value, the responses can be described as follows:

- Feel constrained (23 per cent)
- Feel free (77 per cent)

One group, central and area supervisory officers in Large 1 (City) boards, report more constraint than other respondents, perhaps because the sheer size of such systems makes flexibility more difficult to achieve. Also, as indicated above, interview data suggest that control of financial resources is an important component of discretionary authority as perceived by supervisory officers and by those they deal with.

The figures given above suggest that for the most part supervisory officers see themselves as having considerable discretionary authority, in that they do not feel constrained in going about their work. Some of the responses indicate how interviewees view the situation:

- "I have a good degree of discretion. I'm held accountable, and have clear terms of reference from the superintendent."
- "I'm left pretty much on my own to make decisions. My credibility has grown over the years, and my discretionary authority is quite unlimited."
- "We have a lot. The director allows us to go our own way as long as we keep him informed."
- "We [referring to supervisory officers] establish our own agenda."

A closer look at the responses suggests, however, that although supervisory officers may not *feel* constrained, they may be less free than they perceive themselves as being. Some quotes from interviews support this view:

- "have discretionary authority, but of course this is within the collegial process."
- "I have as much as I want; the board sets policy, and I implement."
- "can hire aides without referring to anyone, also deal with transportation routes." (This was given as an example of decision-making).
- "free as long as I stay within regulations and board policy."
- "have a fair amount of discretion, but model within board is highly consultative, and discretion must be used in making decisions. Must rely on input of others."
- "constrained by collective agreements, but otherwise total."
- "lots of authority to make decisions, within collective agreements and board policy."

Perhaps many know the limits of their authority so clearly that they are no longer perceived as

constraints. They either accept the limitations of their roles, or perhaps can transcend these limitations. One view, expressed by a few interviewees, was that supervisory officers can, to a considerable extent, determine how much autonomy they have, as suggested in the following excerpts:

- I think I have a lot, but I have a lot deliberately; I seek out autonomy. The parameters of my job are public, and so I am accountable. People should negotiate the conditions that give autonomy (budget, location etc.).
- How you approach the job is very important; you need to look for ways to be creative within policy.

There were many supervisory officers (23 per cent) who did feel somewhat constrained, and quotes from these interviews give some of their reasons.

- "Less and less discretion because the board is being forced into developing more and more policies, more established processes you have to follow. Less discretion than ten years ago. Collective agreements and processes are all tightening up. The paper flow has been increasing."
- "My responsibilities have been eroded by central thrusts from the board. The desire to get changes restrains decentralization, keeps the areas from doing things the way they would prefer."
- "I feel I have very little discretionary authority, because of collective agreements, personnel policies, attempts to be consistent across the city. I don't get to make decisions; I just figure out how complicated procedures apply to this situation."
- "The board approves the budget guidelines we propose. Once approved they are certain and there is not a hell of a lot of discretionary power."
- "I have control over very little money, and this prevents me from doing the things I would like to do, like giving principals money for a particular project."

It is not surprising that supervisory officers report that their degree of discretionary authority is highly dependent on the director. As one interviewee observed, "I have enough now, but with the previous director it was different. He had to check everything, and also changed decisions in an arbitrary way."

Board policy provided obvious limits to discretionary authority, but for the most part, the restriction is seen as appropriate. Trustees are occasionally seen as limiting discretionary authority to an unreasonable degree; as one interviewee said, "They do sometimes interfere and get in the way."

6.5. Style variations

6.5.1. Definition of style variations

In addition to looking at *what* supervisory officers do, and the context in which they do it, we have also examined the variation in *how* supervisory officers carry out jobs, in terms of aspects or dimensions of style. These are dimensions which pervade their approach to the job, and are revealed not just in what they say about their own specific tasks, but also in their discussions of what they find satisfying and dissatisfying, and of what changes they would make. Several possible dimensions were identified initially, but dropped when it proved impossible to rate them reliably. Three dimensions were ultimately used: system-driven vs school-driven, reflective vs firefighting, and generalist vs specialist.

Style Dimensions

1. **System-driven vs School-driven**

   Extent to which supervisory officer sees role as assessing and meeting needs of board (trustees) or system-as-system, vs assessing and keeping in touch with school or local needs (represented by teachers, principals, or "area"). Extent to which he/she defines role and responsibility in terms of system or school, and extent to which work is shaped by one or the other. This tension is also described as "manager" vs "educator," but this terminology overstates the distinctions.

   People refer to this dimension when they say supervisory officers have to take a broader perspective (system-driven) as opposed to the limited perspective of the principal (school-driven).

2. **Reflective vs Firefighting**

   Extent to which the supervisory officer manages his/her role, as opposed to being controlled by the job. Does the supervisory officer have a sense of priorities for determining what will be done, and how and when it will be done, or does he/she deal with things on a crisis or day-to-day basis? Extent to which supervisory officer reflects about and shapes his/her role, as opposed to responding to routine requirements and reacting to events.

3. **Generalist vs Specialist**

   Extent to which supervisory officer covers wide range of tasks, vs a narrow specialist focus. A supervisory officer who dealt with staffing, curriculum implementation, evaluation, budget review would be a generalist, while a supervisory officer who did only negotiations would be a specialist, as would someone who primarily did budget development and review. A curriculum superintendent could be anywhere on a continuum, depending on how the role was defined and played out by the incumbent.

Ratings for each dimension were based on a three-point scale. Each point is briefly described below with quotations taken from the interview:

1. **System vs School**

   System: Supervisory officers whose work life revolves primarily around board or system, for example, doing curriculum implementation plans for whole system, setting up human resource plans for system, representing board in dealing with agencies such as ministry or social agencies. "Trying to build an organizational consensus (in system) about kind of education we are providing, and what kind of values we hold." "Providing system-wide leadership." "Take initiative in contacting trustees regularly to keep in touch." "Work to ensure that functions in the board support each other, and that divisions between them are broken down." "Spend too much of my time writing reports for trustees." "Miss contact with schools and children."

   Mid-point: Supervisory officers who do both school-related and system-related work, for example, making staffing plans for local schools, but also serving on committee developing staffing models for the whole system. Supervisory officers see balancing of school and system demands as important part of role. "I try to balance needs of family of schools with needs of system." "Sometimes the regional people are petty, but they're on the firing line.""You have to be aware of what's happening in the board; it's not enough to look at your own position and be narrow-minded, because so many other programs impact on what you're doing." "Need to understand the hierarchy of the board, understand who needs to be informed...but I would find it very hard to work at a distance from the schools, because I like the contact." "You have to be sure that board policies are implemented in your family of schools."

   School: Supervisory officers whose work is more like a "super-principal", in responding to school or family of school needs, evaluating schools, principals etc., making staffing changes, providing resources needed by schools. "Deal most with teachers and principals because they need you." "They expect assistance and planning, and often money." "Spend most of working time in schools, this is top priority. Like to visit each school once a week." "My view of

priorities isn't accepted [by the system]. The new view is that trustees are more important, but this isn't my view."

2. **Reflective vs Firefighting**
   Reflective: Supervisory officers who determine many of their activities by reference to some set of priorities or a plan. Activities are related to an overall purpose or long-term intent. Supervisory officer reflects upon work more than responding on routine basis. "Spends time with staff, clarifying expectations, setting up framework for dealing with things. Once this has been done, hopes staff can deal independently with more matters." "Works on long-term planning process, trying to build an organizational consensus."

   Mid-point: Supervisory officers whose work shows some elements of planning, reflection. Work is determined in reference to priorities, but also by routines or day-to-day demands.

   Firefighter: Supervisory officers whose work seems to be determined by routine expectations or crises, as they arise. Daily demands take priority over a more active shaping of the role. Some interviewees recognize the extent to which this has happened, but feel powerless to change their approach. "You get caught up in a lot of trivia." "People contact me when they want advice." "I guess I spend too much time on survival." "I seem to be mainly implementing decisions, not making them."

3. **Generalist vs Specialist**
   Generalist: Supervisory officer whose work involves a variety and range of tasks and responsibilities. Rather than drawing only on a specialized body of expert knowledge, the person displays a variety of skills. The supervisory officer may in fact *have* such a body of expert knowledge, but in the present job function, does not draw on it exclusively.

   Mid-point: Supervisory officer whose work has some range of tasks and responsibilities, perhaps within more than one function. The supervisory officer may mainly work in one field, but on occasion, take on a range of other tasks

   Specialist: Supervisory officer whose work is primarily in one field, for example, finance, often where a particular professional qualification or body of specialized knowledge is required. Would not ordinarily do tasks outside the specialized area.

6.5.2. Distribution of style ratings

Each supervisory officer interviewed was rated on each of the three dimensions. Table 6-4 shows the distribution of ratings for all officers, while Table 6-5 shows the distribution of ratings according to supervisory officer role. There were no noticeable differences due to board size. As indicated in Table 6-4, 57 per cent of the supervisory officers in our sample are rated as system-driven, 33 per cent at the mid-point, and only 10 per cent as school-driven. On the reflective-firefighting dimension, 15 per cent are rated as reflective, 37 per cent at the mid-point, and 44 per cent as firefighting. On the generalist-specialist dimension, 42 per cent are rated as generalist, 25 per cent at the mid-point, while 32 per cent are rated as specialist. In connection with the low proportion of interviewees rated as school-driven, it should be noted that in some cases, the incumbent would have preferred to be more school-driven, but felt forced by system demands to give less attention to school needs. Most of these officers had area or combined responsibilities. A similar situation prevails with the reflective-firefighting dimension, in that some of those rated as firefighting voiced dissatisfaction at being so bound up with day-to-day demands, and expressed a desire for more opportunity to think about what they were doing.

Table 6-5 shows the variance in patterns for supervisory officers in different roles. To allow easy comparison, the results are given only in percentages. Directors, as might be anticipated, are overwhelmingly (95 per cent) system-driven and generalist. Nearly half are rated as reflective, a much higher percentage than in any other role.

Table 6-4: Style Ratings (All Supervisory Officers)

System-driven vs School-driven			Reflective vs Firefighting			Generalist vs Specialist		
	No.	%		No.	%		No.	%
System	126	57	Reflective	34	15	Generalist	93	42
Mid-point	74	33	Mid-point	82	37	Mid-point	56	25
School	21	10	Firefighting	97	44	Specialist	72	32
Could not rate	1	-	Could not rate	9	4	Could not rate	1	-
Totals	222			222			222	

Table 6-5: Style Ratings by Role (Percentages)

System-driven vs School-driven					
	Director	Business	Central	Area	Combined
System	95%	100%	74%	11%	0%
Mid-point	5%	0%	25%	57%	80%
School	0%	0%	0%	32%	20%

Reflective vs Firefighting					
Reflective	45%	11%	17%	5%	15%
Mid-point	36%	41%	47%	33%	40%
Firefighting	18%	48%	36%	62%	45%

Generalist vs Specialist					
Generalist	95%	4%	20%	84%	60%
Mid-point	5%	16%	39%	16%	40%
Specialist	0%	80%	41%	0%	0%

Business supervisory officers are all rated as system-driven, and 80 per cent are rated as specialist. Only 11 per cent were rated as reflective, in general because much of their work seemed determined by cyclical routines more than considered priorities.

Central supervisory officers fall primarily in the system-driven category, with the remainder rated at the mid-point. On the reflective-firefighting dimension, 17 per cent were reflective, and 47 per cent at the mid-point. Respondents were dispersed across the generalist-specialist dimension, with 20 per cent generalist, 39 per cent at the mid-point, 41 per cent specialist.

The style ratings for area supervisory officers show quite a different picture. Only 11 per cent are system-driven, with 57 per cent at the mid-point, and 32 per cent school-driven. Again, it is important to

note that some of those rated toward the system-driven end of the scale would prefer to spend more time and attention dealing with schools, but feel constrained by system demands. The crisis management nature of the role (responding to day-to-day from schools, parents, and the system) is represented in the high proportion (62 per cent) rated as firefighting. From what has been said about the role, it is perhaps not surprising that no area supervisory officers are rated as specialist.

The combined supervisory officer again falls between the central and area roles, with elements of both. The vast majority (80 per cent) are rated as being at the mid-point of the system-driven vs school-driven dimension, showing the importance to these roles of balancing system and school demands. Fifteen per cent are rated as "reflective", 40 per cent at the mid-point, and 45 per cent as "firefighting". On the generalist-specialist dimension, 60 per cent were "generalist" and 40 per cent at the mid-point. None are rated as specialists.

6.5.3. Examples of style dimension differences

In order to clarify the style of dimensions, this section presents brief portraits of two typical supervisory officers at different points on the reflective/firefighting dimensions. Information is taken from actual interviews, but data have been combined into composite cases, primarily to avoid the possibility of any supervisory officers being identified. Table 6-6 shows two central office superintendents with responsibility for special education. One is rated as reflective, the other firefighting. Data are presented to show the similarities in the duties and tasks they perform, and the differences in the way each approaches these duties. The reflective/firefighting dimension was illustrated because it has the most potential for influence and for use as a model of selection and training.

6.5.4. Significance of style dimensions

What do data on "style dimensions" tell us? First, the data help enrich the depiction of the supervisory officer role, and allow us to make sense of some of the different patterns revealed in the interviews. Second, they provide a tentative, but potentially significant, first step in overcoming a gap in our data. As noted earlier, we have no performance data, and thus no indication of how well any of our respondents is carrying out his or her responsibilities. The data on "style" can be related to work by researchers such as Leithwood and Stager, who compared the problem-solving behaviour of highly effective principals with that of their moderately effective colleagues (Leithwood and Stager, 1986). Their description of the behaviour of highly effective principals includes descriptors which sound very like the "reflective" (and to a lesser extent the "system-driven") descriptor we have developed. According to these researchers, the highly effective administrators (in this case principals):

- ....become more reflective about their own processes and refine those processes over time;
- ....are more aware of school system needs and requirements and try harder to take them into account in school-level problem solving;
- derive more personal enjoyment from problem solving and, partly as a consequence of this, are more proactive in dealing with school problems (Leithwood and Stager, 1986, p. 24).

Table 6-6: Style Differences: Central Supervisory Officers Responsible for Special Education

Task or Duty	Firefighting Supervisory Officer	Reflective Supervisory Officer
Implement the ministry and board policy with regard to special education	Ad hoc interpretation of policies as problems arise.	Trying to *do myself out of a job* in sense of setting up policies, procedures and roles that will *run themselves*. There will be no need for separate special education functions; will be integrated.
Solve problems	Trying to resolve crisis. Get rid of the difficulty and try to satisfy people involved.	Read danger signs, solve problems before crisis appears. Also try to learn, maybe improve procedures. Try to come up with unique approaches to problems.
Dealing with administrative matters	Deals with things as they come up. May often express concern about heavy load. Acceptance of "the way things are".	Sets priorities, deals first with those that are most significant. May handle other matters "on the fly". Figures out better ways of doing things.
Attend IPRCs	Attends because required to do so, tries to ensure policy carried out fairly and completely. Focus on meeting special education needs as defined.	Sees attendance as a multi-purpose activity, giving opportunity to see how schools function in terms of leadership and decision-making. Get to know staff and current issues. Also concerned that good decisions are made.
Evaluation of our work	Either does not mention, or expresses regret at not having time to reflect. "I get trapped in a lot of trivia, I guess". "I'm so busy doing things". No clearly articulated plans for own future.	"I make sure I find time to stand back and look at what we're doing, and how we can improve." Gives examples of changes made recently in own work patterns, and how function operates. Outlines possible plans for own future.

6.6. What is the impact of what supervisory officers do?

The interview data provide two sources of information about the perceived impact of supervisory officers, but both sources are somewhat indirect. Principals were asked what supervisory officers did that helped and hindered the principals in their work, and supervisory officers themselves were asked what would be the impact of the elimination of their own role. A paper by Musella and Leithwood (1987) provides additional data about the influence of directors of education on school effectiveness, as perceived by those in the system and those interacting with it.

6.6.1. As seen by principals

Data related to the principals' viewpoint came from responses to the question, "What do supervisory officers do that helps or hinders you in your work?" In answering the question, principals seemed to be speaking almost entirely of area supervisory officers, presumably because these are the ones most often dealt with.

The following list indicates the areas in which supervisory officers were perceived as helpful to principals. Factors are listed in order of priority, based on how frequently each was mentioned in the interviews. The first two were mentioned by more than half the respondents.

- provision of support;
- resources (information or money);
- curriculum and program delivery;
- setting objectives and directions;
- policy.

Other items, mentioned by only a few principals, included general problem-solving, help with teacher evaluation, and dealing with personnel problems.

Provision of "support", the primary factor, is mentioned explicitly by most principals, but several of the other points could be subsumed under the heading of "support". The second main factor mentioned is the provision of resources, both information and material resources (money and/or equipment). There were no differences in responses related to board size, in that principals in all boards gave similar responses.

The actions most frequently mentioned as hindering rather than helping are summarized as follows.

- addition of unnecessary "paper work" to principal's job;
- unilateral decision-making (not using input from others);
- not providing direction;
- too many meetings;
- loss of contact with schools (they are referring to both loss of contact on the part of the supervisory officers, and also on the part of principals because of system demands requiring them to be out of schools);
- lack of communication.

There were some differences related to size of board, since only in large boards did principals complain of "unilateral decision-making" and "too many meetings". A significant number of principals (8 out of our sample of 45) could think of nothing done by supervisory officers that hindered them in their work.

6.6.2. As seen by supervisory officers themselves

Rather than a direct question about "impact on the system", supervisory officers were asked what would be the impact if their role ceased to exist. Directors were not asked the question, since there seemed little point in exploring the possible consequences of having a system with no CEO. For the other respondents, the results can be summarized as follows:

- There would be a loss of coordination and leadership in the system. Many saw little impact in the short run, but over a longer time span, such effects would be felt.
- Many supervisory officers saw little *educational* impact were their roles to be eliminated, but this may be related to the short-term/long-term distinction referred to above and to the belief that some of the existing functions could be efficiently incorporated into other roles.
- Many tasks would be delegated to others in the system, adding to the work-loads of other people.
- Business supervisory officers tended to believe the system could not function without the existence of their roles.

- Superintendents of French-language schools believed the loss of their role would have a serious effect on the operation of French-language schools in these boards. Such schools would lose their advocate.

There were some differences related to board size, in that in large boards, supervisory officers were more inclined to think their duties could be picked up by someone else. This is presumably related to the large number of supervisory officers in such boards, and the existence of many other support staff.

6.7. Changes in role

Supervisory officers were asked what changes they anticipated in the role in the future, but in answering the question, many referred to changes that had taken place over the past few years. As indicated earlier, the 1969 shift to amalgamated county boards marked the beginning of a drastically changed role. Our interviews suggest that the two main changes have to do with school supervision and the "politicizing" of the supervisory officer role. The role of the supervisory officer was historically one of teacher and principal supervision, which involved evaluation and development. Both supervisory officers and principals agree that supervisory officers now spend "less time in the school" and "more time pushing paper". As noted by one interviewee, "The new supervisory officer is more of a bureaucrat than an educator." Teacher evaluation has shifted to principals, who are often viewed as "not trained to do teacher evaluation". It is not clear how supervisory officers are trained to evaluate teachers, but our respondents did not express a concern about that.

As we have noted earlier, area supervisory officers deal far more with schools and principals than do their central office colleagues. Especially in large boards, central supervisory officers are rarely in schools, although they may deal with principals, by telephone, on specific issues relating to their function (personnel or finance). For supervisory officers with area or combined responsibilities, however, dealing with principals is a vital part of the job. Most area superintendents stressed that a central part of their role should be to develop the leadership effectiveness of principals, but that there was insufficient time to fulfil this role adequately.

The second major shift in the role has to do with the changing role of the trustee, and the subsequent "politicizing" of the supervisory officer role. To a large extent, this development is seen as accounting for the difficulty that supervisory officers have in attending to school rather than system needs. Not only have trustees become more powerful, but they also wish to be involved in a different way than has been customary. Trustees tend to become involved in the day-to-day operation of schools, a trend that administrators believe changes and often interferes with their work. Trustees also make demands on administrators that are seen as political rather than educational. When trustees ask for reports, supervisory officers are the ones who spend time preparing them, and some of them feel their time would be better spent on other activities. Time spent in board committee meetings was also seen as taking supervisory officers away from the "educational" part of their work, and was sometimes seen as less valuable than spending time in schools, or working with principals. Whatever the case, it was evident that supervisory officers spend large amounts of time preparing reports for the board.

When supervisory officers speculated about future changes in their role, some could think of nothing specific, or were not prepared to commit themselves. However, others anticipated changes in the selection and certification requirements (partly because of the current research), possible changes due to political developments such as Bill 30 and Bill 75, and a need for greater managerial and business skills among supervisory officers. Many anticipated continued need for adaptability on the part of supervisory officers in the future. Some respondents hoped for increased chances for supervisory officers to act as curriculum leaders, but it was not clear that they actually expected this shift to take place. A few of our respondents

articulated a felt need to refocus and redefine supervisory officer activities in terms of educational (especially curriculum) leadership.

6.8. Profile of board factors

The conceptual framework for the study indicates that the supervisory officer operates within a systems context. At the macro level, the board environment encompassing school systems is critical in determining the issues which confront a particular board. The role is further shaped by factors specific to individual boards at a micro level. An appreciation of the nature of the total system in which supervisory officers perform is key to the understanding of the supervisory officer role. During the interviews, directors and chairpersons of the board were asked to identify community factors which were thought to impinge on the operations of their board. It is interesting to note a very high degree of congruence among the perceptions of a board's administrative and political leaders. In many cases, the descriptors used were virtually identical.

While a variety of answers were given to the question, it was reasonably easy to identify major themes that highlight some of the pressures buffeting school boards in today's environment. These include:

- changing enrolment patterns:
- French/English language:
- Protestant/Catholic religions:
- multi-ethnic and multicultural factors:
- socio-economic status:
- community attitudes:

Enrolment patterns were identified as declining, expanding, and shifting. Some boards are faced with problems associated with shrinking inner-city student populations and corresponding bulging of suburban student populations. The French/English language and Protestant/Catholic religion issues have been exacerbated by recent legislation, Bill 75 and Bill 30. Community attitudes result from the existence of all of these factors in the immediate environment. Conservatism, small-town rural values, and professional middle-class expectations were frequently mentioned as impinging on board operations.

These themes appear to cut across regional boundaries, board religious denomination, and board size, although multicultural and multi-ethnic considerations seem to be peculiar to larger boards. Clearly, the role of the supervisory officer is influenced daily by these environmental factors over which the incumbent has little control. Board policy is a reflection of community characteristics as well as ministry directives. The more turbulent the environment of the board, the more likely the supervisory officer is going to face increasing demands and thus, the higher the stress level at which he or she must perform.

6.8.1. Intra-System factors

A sense of the board context surrounding the supervisory officer roles was obtained through examination of the style variables of the sample boards. Four dimensions were ultimately used to draw up these board profiles: inbred vs outbred, accord vs discord between trustees and administrators, accord vs discord among administrators, and director-driven vs trustee-driven. These "style dimensions" are outlined below:

1. Inbred vs Outbred: extent to which board is inward vs outward looking; extent to which board interacts with other boards; extent to which appointments of supervisory officers are internal vs external.

2. Accord vs Discord: (a) extent to which relations between trustees and administrators are harmonious; extent to which trustees' contributions to the board's operations are constructive or destructive; (b) extent to which relations among administrators are harmonious, for example, team approach to decision-making vs individual approach.

3. Director-driven vs Trustee-driven: extent to which the director is most influential in setting the direction of the board; extent to which director is seen to have strong leadership skills; extent to which trustees determine the day-to-day operations of the board.

Ratings for each dimension were based on a three-point scale. Each point is defined below:

1. **Inbred vs. Outbred**

Inbred: Board which is primarily inward-looking in its operations. Selection of supervisory officers tends to be almost entirely from within the system and interaction with personnel from other boards is minimal.

Midpoint: Board which is not entirely closed to the idea of selection of supervisory officers from other boards but would still favour its own supervisory officers. Interacts with personnel from other boards as needed.

Outbred: Board which is outward-looking in its operations. Selection of supervisory officers is advertised widely and open to all supervisory officers. Encourages interaction with other boards.

2. **Accord vs Discord**

a). *between trustees and administrators*

Accord: Trustees and administrators have mutual respect for each other and have developed a good working relationship.

Mid-point: Trustees and administrators generally work together well but occasionally conflicts develop.

Discord: Trustees and administrators lack respect for each other and operate in an environment of considerable conflict.

b). *among administrators*

Accord: Administrators have mutual respect for each other and use a team approach to decision-making.

Mid-point: Administrators usually have respect for each other and sometimes use a team approach to decision-making and sometimes an individual approach.

Discord: Administrators lack respect for each other and prefer to approach decisions individually.

3. **Director-driven vs Trustee-driven**

Director-driven: Director is perceived by trustees and administrators to be the system's leader. Trustees seldom interfere in the day-to-day operations of the board.

Mid-point: Director is perceived to be the leader most of the time but does not always influence trustees in the preferred direction.

Trustee-driven: Director is not perceived to be the leader but rather trustees are seen to be the dominant force. Trustees are constantly involved in the day-to-day operations of the board.

After the interviews had been completed, board summaries were completed for each board, synthesizing the interview data to produce a broad description of unique characteristics for each board. These summaries contained the following types of information:

> "The _____ Board of Education can be described as a board going through turbulent times. Firstly, as in many Ontario boards of education, _____ is faced with the realities of declining enrolment. The prospect of school closures has resulted in the board being taken to court, unsuccessfully, by the local communities. It is anticipated that declining enrolment will be exacerbated by the extension of Catholic school funding."

> "There was evidence of conflict in the board, between trustees and the director, and to some extent between the administration and the system as a whole. The director was mentioned in several interviews as the cause of considerable dissatisfaction in the system. He was perceived as a weak leader, unable to give direction and guidance to either trustees or administrators, vacillating in decisions, subject to undue influence by pressure groups even after decisions have been made."

> "The system is inbred with only one supervisory officer coming from outside the _____ area. This appears to be a source of conflict as supervisory officers perceive that other supervisory officers and the director think they can do a better job."

Each sample board was then rated on the four dimensions using these summaries. Where the information was ambiguous, the interview team was asked to clarify the rating.

An analysis of these ratings did not indicate any strong clustering of board types by region, size or denomination. However, some tendencies exist. Small boards tend to be more outbred, to have accord between administrators and trustees as well as among administrators, and to be director-driven. These tendencies can be attributed to the small numbers of personalities involved. Medium boards tend to be more inbred, to experience some discord between trustees and administrators and among administrators, and to be director-driven. Large boards tend to be very inbred, to experience some degree of discord between trustees and administrators and among administrators, and to be director-driven in Large 2 boards and trustee-driven in Large 1 boards.

The finding that most of the boards in our sample are inbred is noteworthy. The percentage of appointments made from within the system is a good measure of the very high degree of inbreeding. Indeed, the larger the system is, the higher the inbreeding. Several boards indicated that this is formal board policy. This situation has profound implications for the mobility of supervisory officers, although there is some evidence that boards are considering opening up their systems to "new blood".

6.8.2. Impact of organizational structure and practices on work of supervisory officers.

All supervisory officers were asked during the interview to identify ways in which the organizational structure, practices, and procedures helped or hindered their work. This question produced a wide range of answers. These were placed into four or five discrete categories, labelled as follows:

1. Board structure--Hierarchical/Decentralized
2. Area vs Central Office division
3. Trustee involvement--Control/Support
4. Communication barriers/Consultative model
5. Role definition and expectations--Clarity/Ambiguity

It became obvious that these factors could be viewed positively or negatively depending on the board context. Indeed, they were not always perceived the same way within a particular board. For example, in one board, the team/consultative approach was thought to be very helpful to board operations but at the same time a hindrance in terms of the time it required.

The analysis revealed that the size of the board largely determined how this question was answered. Small boards identified good organizational structure, the team approach, and a high level of involvement in all board operations as very helpful -- owing to board size. Some of the small boards' supervisory officers, however, wouldn't identify any factors, simply saying they had "no problems".

In medium boards, the organizational structure is almost unanimously mentioned as a helpful factor. In particular, the combination structure is viewed as a very useful organizational model. The style of decision-making, a consultative approach using the administrative council as the vehicle, is considered to be helpful. The style of the director is paramount in facilitating this approach to decision-making. The role of the trustee is identified as a hindrance in some medium boards, although in many cases, the problem consists in uncertainty as to what the role is and not with actual trustee interference.

It is in the large boards where helpful and non-helpful factors seem to be more pronounced. Size tends to become a negative factor in the efficient operations of the board. Especially in the very large boards, there appears to be some point where efficient management breaks down. Role definitions and expectations become ambiguous to the incumbents. Area superintendents feel isolated and powerless in the system and central office supervisory officers feel a lack of control and influence in the schools. Principals perceive central office personnel as out of touch with the schools and students. The tiered structures with their executive and administrative councils reinforce these perceptions, as area superintendents are effectively removed from decision-making and vital information. In some large boards, there is a lack of overall organization as the system becomes too large for anyone to comprehend all its workings. The necessity in some of these boards to operate out of more than one board office accentuates the communications problems and feelings of isolation, particularly if the offices are organized on linguistic lines. Trustee interference seems to be more pronounced in the large boards.

From the material in this chapter, we have a fairly complete picture of what supervisory officers report they do, and some indication of the role as seen by trustees and principals. The next questions are (a) How do supervisory officers feel about their roles (Chapter 8: Satisfaction and stress), and (b) What skills do supervisory officers need? (Chapter 9: Skills). At this point, with data on what supervisory officers do, how they feel about their work, and what skills they need, a basis will exist for recommendations concerning selection, training, and certification.

6.9. Conclusions and implications

In this chapter, we have described the tasks and responsibilities of the supervisory officer role, and have gone on to analyse these data in a variety of ways. Such an analytic approach is necessary for dealing with the large amounts of data, for comparing work in different roles and boards, and for developing recommendations based on a thorough knowledge of what supervisory officers do. However, there is a danger that the "wholeness" of the role may be lost in the analytic approach. To counter this fragmentation, and regain a sense of the flow of the supervisory officer's role, readers are urged to go back to the descriptions at the beginning of the chapter.

A summary of the main findings, with implications for possible reform is given below:

- The analysis has suggested not one definition of what a supervisory officer does, nor a series of unrelated job descriptions, but rather a cluster of actions, with the content or subject dependent on the particular context in which the supervisory officer works (for instance, the formal role or the board context). Such a conclusion suggests a core of essential skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours, with the balance of the competencies (specific knowledge and skills) dependent on whether the supervisory officer is an area superintendent, a curriculum superintendent, or a business superintendent, and on board characteristics, such as size, the role of trustees, the decision-making model, and so on. (See Chapter 9 for an elaboration of these skills).

- Tasks and responsibilities do not vary a great deal across different boards: factors such as region, or whether a board is public or separate, make very little difference. Size of board makes a difference primarily in the degree to which central supervisory officers are highly specialized, and in the number of levels in the hierarchy of the organization, which in turn seems to lead to blurring of lines of authority, and lack of input from many supervisory officers.

- Tasks and responsibilities of each of the five identified roles (director, business, central, area and combined) can be described reasonably clearly. Although job descriptions are rarely complete, they describe supervisory officer responsibilities in a manner similar to that provided by the incumbents.

- When tasks and responsibilities are analysed into the *actions* involved, distinguished from the *focus or content*, it turns out that most supervisory jobs involve a common core of actions (planning, evaluating, developing, negotiating, implementing, ensuring compliance etc.). The variation among roles comes more in the *focus or content* (personnel, finance, school organization and program, curriculum, etc.).

- Dealing with other people seems to be the most important part of the job, and interactions with others are the vehicle for accomplishing much of the work. What they do with others is so varied as to be difficult to describe fully: the interactions are formal, informal, fleeting; ad hoc, personal, written, or by telephone; the interactions may be one-on-one, small groups or large public meetings; the supervisory officers are persuading, inspiring, negotiating, establishing trust, resolving conflict, informing etc. The people with whom tney relate are myriad, mostly in the system (primarily trustees, director, other supervisory officers, and principals), but also outside (ministry, community etc.). It is important to note that interacting with others is not an end in itself; in other words, the important point is not "getting along with others", but accomplishing the task through the interaction, for instance, resolving the conflict, or getting the community to agree to placement of the new school, or persuading the trustee to change his mind.

- Supervisory officers tend to be *system-driven* more than *school-driven*, even some who would prefer to be otherwise. In other words, system needs tend to take priority over and (often squeeze out) local school needs. The pressures from central office and the trustees have more impact than pressures from local schools. Supervisory officers are the link, and they seem to end up acting more in response to system than local needs. Note: this may be exactly the way things should be; it is simply a description.

- Supervisory officers tend to be *firefighters*, in the sense that most of their work is determined by routine demands, or is dealing with crises. Not many of their tasks are done in response to reflective setting of priorities. This point is very important when related to literature on effective managers, and to the Leithwood and Stager (1986) data on the differences between highly effective principals, and their moderately effective counterparts.

- One of the most glaring problems is that it is not at all clear what criteria are being used or should be used to determine the appropriateness or effectiveness of what supervisory officers do.

- At some point in the evolution of the organization of the board, the system can become too large to function efficiently and effectively. Some of our sample boards are faced with this problem. Consideration must be given to the optimal upper limit of enrolment for a board and the corresponding need for restructuring or even creating new boards.

- Another implication concerns the role of trustees in the board. Some boards are very much trustee-driven while others experience less trustee involvement. There are situations within a board where some of the administrators perceive good relations with trustees while their colleagues perceive poor relations with trustees. This implies a need for training in political skills for supervisory officers. There are obviously optimum methods of dealing with trustees that supervisory officers seem to have to develop on their own.

- A final point has to do with the most effective use of supervisory officer time. As a group of educational managers, our interviewees were involved in some tasks (phone calls, regular meetings of some task committees, drafting reports, and correspondence), which could be effectively handled, at least initially, by a competent assistant. Such a person would of course need to be knowledgeable about board and ministry policy and educational matters. In most boards, supervisory officers do not have such support available. If a job cannot be handled by a secretary, the supervisory officer must do it. We suspect that a proportion of their existing work could be handled by support staff at much lower costs, with supervisory officers being freed to concentrate on core tasks.

Chapter 7
Selection and Training

7.1. Selection criteria and procedures

Questions about selection criteria and procedures were asked in the interviews. Analysis of supervisory officers' perceptions of the selection process led to identification of eleven themes or factors, each of which is briefly discussed in this section. The section also analyses existing hiring processes for supervisory officers, and outlines the respondents' ideas for improving them. Responses to questions about the attractiveness of supervisory officer positions and the calibre of applicants for them are then discussed. Finally, the question of the suitability of business supervisory officers for the directorship is briefly considered.

7.1.1. Selection criteria inferred from the numerical analysis

While the numerical analysis (section 2.4) does not provide data specifically concerned with criteria and procedures for the selection of supervisory officers, certain inferences can be drawn from its results. Three-quarters of our respondents for example, were appointed from within their board. While perhaps not stated as formal policy, this practice indicates a clear preference for promoting from within rather than outside the system. It is also evident that experience outside education, such as in business, government and trade, does not count much in the selection of supervisory officers. Only about 10 per cent of our respondents had outside experience in government or trade. The proportion with experience in business was slightly greater (30 per cent), and is probably skewed towards those who currently hold or have previously held supervisory officer positions in the business category. Further to the point, experience in teaching and in school administration were the only two categories of professional experience rated "essential" by most respondents. Experience in business, local staff positions, and the Ministry of Education were only rated "essential" by 15 per cent or less (though 75 per cent or more said those kinds of experience were "desirable").

7.1.2. Selection criteria inferred from interviews

We did not ask respondents to describe the process by which they were appointed to their present position, but we did ask them why they thought they got the job, and what advantages they thought they had over other candidates. We do not claim that the reasons they gave necessarily came into play in the actual hiring process. Indeed, several respondents said they didn't know what criteria were used. We do believe that their thoughts about what qualified them to get their current jobs provide an indirect measure of the kinds of practical criteria they think are relevant and used in the selection of supervisory officers. What follows, is an analysis of "inferred selection criteria" based on respondents' perceptions of the process leading to their own appointment.

We consider the following eleven themes:

1. Source of experience (internal, external, mixed)
2. Scope of experience (line promotions, diversity of experience)
3. Track record (credibility, visibility, reputation)
4. Skills, competencies and knowledge
5. Educational qualifications
6. Organizational fit
7. Personal goals
8. Gender/ethnicity
9. Local political support
10. Lack of competition
11. Administrative reorganization

Note that some of these themes are frequently mentioned, whereas others are more notable for their frequent omission. We include the latter, because they refer to kinds of criteria one might have expected to play a greater role in selection than reported.

There is *no single set* of inferred selection criteria typical of all supervisory officers. Nor do distinct sets of criteria appear when supervisory officers are grouped by board size, major role group (with exception of business), board or religion (public vs separate). Instead, we identified a number of issues or themes which are mentioned in supervisory officers' speculations about why they were hired. Variations within a theme break out in different ways for different themes (e.g., by role group, by board size). The following discussion is organized in relation to the eleven selection criteria themes listed. For each theme, responses to the question "Why were you hired?" were checked for possible variation in terms of board size, board, role groups, religion, and other. The selection criteria themes are discussed below.

Source of experience

There is little point in belabouring the fact that most supervisory officers in all boards and role groups are in-house appointments. The directors of education are the only group for which a substantial proportion of external appointments were recorded (about one-third). A number of business supervisory officers came in from outside the boards when larger administrative units were formed in 1969. More recently appointed supervisory officers in the group are likely to have been promoted through the line of business-related positions that evolved after amalgamation.

The basic point is that boards usually look and opt for local candidates with a good professional track record. Externally appointed supervisory officers in our sample suggested a number of reasons why their coming from the outside might have been an advantage in their selection: more diverse administrative experience, successful experience in positions of similar responsibility (e.g., director in another board), board desire for a new leadership approach, and prior skills or experience in dealing with an unresolved or anticipated local issue.

Scope of experience

Local professional experience is more highly valued than experience outside the board in the selection of most supervisory officers. For internally appointed supervisory officers, however, additional professional experiences outside the board are often cited as giving them an edge on other candidates.

Diversity of experiences is also important. The majority of supervisory officers refer mainly to their line administrative experience and promotions from teacher to vice-principal to principal and up through the ranks of superintendents. A significant number of respondents, however, claim that their range of experience, including but not limited to conventional administrative positions, was important in selection. Externally appointed supervisory officers in particular are likely to cite a broad range of experiences as a contributing factor (for example, positions in other boards, with the ministry, involvement in provincial committees, work in other agencies). Diversity of experience is also cited by some internally appointed supervisory officers. Participation in system projects and committees, positions in various administrative departments, teaching and administrative experience in both panels, and work on ministry projects are the kinds of "diverse" experiences most often mentioned. Nonetheless, diversity of experience does not appear as a consistent selection criterion for any type of board or role group.

Track record

When asked why they thought they were appointed, many supervisory officers referred to their professional track record. This response was more common for internally appointed than externally appointed supervisory officers, and for supervisory officers in operations and programs and divisions, as opposed to business. Very few supervisory officers made reference to their reputations as teachers. Most talked about their record in administrative positions (as principals, supervisory officers) and in leadership roles on system projects and committees (for example, Bill 82 planning process). Many seemed to imply that their cumulative track record was itself a criterion for promotion. They did not talk about specific accomplishments. Among the area superintendents, "success as a principal" was repeatedly mentioned. As explained by the interviewees, a good track record gives a candidate credibility and visibility in the system. Local credibility and visibility were often highlighted by internally appointed supervisory officers at the director, central, and area levels.

Skills, competencies and knowledge

Not surprisingly, supervisory officer positions in specialized areas attract people with prior demonstrated experience and skills in those areas. This holds for supervisory officers in business, personnel, special education, French-language education, and for a subset of those with program responsibility.

Major skill and knowledge categories which cut across role groups and board types include administrative skills, leadership abilities, human relations and communications skills and personal efficacy. On the whole, few supervisory officers said they had specific administrative and/or leadership skills and qualities which figured in their appointments. Administrative skills such as efficiency and organization, task completion, "handling issues", planning, and coping with multiple activities were most consistently cited by supervisory officers at the area level.

So few supervisory officers made reference to their general leadership abilities (for example, innovativeness, creativity, decision-making style), that their omission is more worthy of note than their inclusion. Moreover, leadership criteria are listed more frequently by directors, especially those appointed from outside the board, than by any other role group. Curriculum leadership is the only specific area of leadership mentioned with any frequency. As reflected in our interviews, demonstrated leadership in

curriculum development and implementation figures almost exclusively in the appointment of central supervisory officers with program responsibilities. This selection criterion is rarely cited by directors, supervisory officers in operations, student services and special education, personnel, or business. A smattering of area level supervisory officers said their program background helped them get the job. Even within the program role group, however, sizeable numbers of supervisory officers did not claim any particular expertise in curriculum management. For example, 4 of the 10 program supervisory officers interviewed in medium-sized boards did not mention this criterion.

Human relations skills ("work well with people") surfaced as a major inferred criterion for selection for central program and personnel supervisory officers, and some area supervisory officers, perhaps because the people in these positions interact with subordinate staff more often than supervisory officers in other central positions. We were surprised that little mention was made by any group of supervisory officers of political skills in dealing with the public and staff. Only a small number of the directors (3) and a few central operations supervisory officers said their understanding of the local community was a factor in their appointment.

Administrative skills, leadership abilities, human relations skills, and personal efficacy are the most frequently mentioned categories of skill and knowledge cited as inferred selection criteria. We do not want to over-generalize about them. Many respondents listed no specific skills or qualities, referring only to their track record. Others simply said they were the "best qualified" without elaborating on specific qualifications. Moreover, there were respondents in all categories who said they were uncertain or that luck ("the right place at the right time") was the major criterion. Lack of competition is another theme, which is discussed later.

Educational qualifications

Education is another inferred selection criterion more conspicuous by its lack of mention than by its presence. Business supervisory officers were the only group that consistently cited educational and professional qualifications as a reason for their selection. Those who referred to their professional qualifications were often vague about the specific factors contributing to their appointments. These were seen as helpful, in general, but were not cited in terms of specific training or qualifications for the position in question.

Personal goals

Few supervisory officers said anything about personal goals or priorities in reflecting on their appointments. In fact, they were mentioned by only four of the directors, and each referred to a different aspect of the educational process -- high priority on students, commitment to educational growth, clear image of the educated person, and high priority on good teaching. Relative to the other criteria described, it seems that the majority of supervisory officers do not get selected on the basis of some clearly articulated vision of the teaching and learning process. This is especially striking when compared to the large number who cited their administrative track record. In short, one's administrative career history stands out as more important than one's goals for education.

Gender

Of the few women supervisory officers in our sample, some indicated that being a woman was not an important factor in hiring; others thought that all other things considered, it did help. Virtually everyone agreed that more women should be appointed to the position. Our study is too limited to capture the potential trend in the appointment of women to positions of authority, because most of those appointments are presently occurring at the vice-principal and principal levels. Selection and promotion procedures

combined with the large number of administrator retirements over the next ten years provide an opportunity for many more women supervisory officers to be appointed (see Musella and Lawton, 1986). This potential trend is at a very early stage relative to supervisory officers.

Organizational fit

Fitting in with the organization is another recurring theme in talk about reasons for one's own appointment. It was most salient among the directors in our interview sample (4 of 21). No doubt, perceived organizational fit is an implicit criterion in the appointment of many more supervisory officers than those who actually mentioned it in the interviews. Directors, central and area supervisory officers drew attention to several dimensions of organizational fit. Some simply said their skills (unspecified) matched board needs (unclarified) at the time. Others referred to a match between specific skills/experiences and current local needs (for example, experience managing a large system coupled with a growing board; experience arbitrating French-English disputes coupled with local conflict between those communities). Some supervisory officers said they were chosen because of the board's desire to achieve a balance in the supervisory officer ranks between people with elementary and secondary backgrounds, or other criteria (e.g., city, rural). A few supervisory officers from the northern boards alluded to their personal fit with the physical environment, in the sense of being comfortable living and working away from the urban context and milder winters of Southern and Eastern Ontario.

Others said that the compatibility of their leadership styles with those of other system administrators was a criterion in their selection. In summary, when organizational fit comes into play in supervisory officer selection, it may be to match a local need or issue, to create or maintain a political balance of competing interests in the administration, to maintain a consistent leadership approach among system officials, or to find someone willing to work in a specific geographic context.

Local political support

Political support from the director or other supervisory officers, from principals, from trustees and "the public" is a frequently mentioned advantage in supervisory officer selection. This is most true for central supervisory officers (no particular role group) in large and medium boards. Quite a few of those who talked about political support from superior administrators also had little or no competition for the job. Three of the directors cited strong public support for their candidacy. Some interviewees complained about the biases of political support in which people are selected for personal and political reasons over other candidates with better qualifications.

Lack of competition

Although we did not directly ask how much competition the supervisory officers had when they applied for their current post, a number of interviewees told us that there were few applications or no competition for the job. Some admitted that they did not seek the position, rather they were actively recruited by senior officials or directly promoted. Lack of competition was not mentioned by a large number of supervisory officers.

Administrative reorganization

Although administrative reorganization is not really a criterion for selection, it was mentioned by several interviewees as part of the organizational context leading to their appointments. In short, changes in administrative structure often result in new supervisory officer positions and new entry points for promotion. Administrative reorganization sometimes comes about from provincial actions. The 1969 amalgamation of small school boards into larger administrative units resulted in the transfer of a number of supervisory officers in our sample from ministry positions (inspectors, program consultants) to the

boards. The passage of mandatory special education legislation in 1980 (Bill 82) also resulted in expanded supervisory officer opportunities. Administrative reorganization can also come about from local decisions based on locally determined needs, often associated with expanding or declining enrolment or with dissatisfaction with current organizational structures.

7.1.3. Local selection processes

The selection process for supervisory officers has two phases. The first has to do with the initial selection process for certification as a supervisory officer, the second with the hiring process for specific positions. We asked interviewees to suggest improvements in both phases. Respondents across the sample had much more to say about improving the certification process than local hiring procedures. Many focused their remarks exclusively on the former (due partly to variation in frequency that interviewers asked the second question). These data are reviewed in Chapter 10. This section outlines respondents' ideas for improving the processes of selection at the local level.

Only the directors in our sample were asked directly to describe the process for selecting supervisory officers for positions in their board. A few others volunteered this information, but the data are too scattered across boards and role groups to make any generalizations or to develop descriptions of "typical" selection processes. What we can do is highlight some of the major sources of variation in local selection processes, and give some examples of distinctive processes (without saying that these are necessarily typical for a subset of boards). Note that formal written selection procedures were only provided to us by officials from one board in our sample.

Salient variations in local processes for hiring supervisory officers relate to the following aspects: degree of formalization and standardization of procedures; source of selection criteria; recruitment scope and procedures; sources of data about the candidates; screening and short-listing procedures; interviews; roles of director and other supervisory officers; and role of trustees in the process.

Central and area level supervisory officers in several boards sampled said either that there is no formal standard process in their system or that they were uncertain what it might be. Respondents in two other systems complained that senior officials and trustees were unable to settle on a particular process, and that different selection processes were used on different occasions. We would hesitate to guess the proportion of boards without a standard, commonly known supervisory officer selection process, but it is clearly a significant subset of boards across the province. As indicated, formal selection procedures were obtained from only one board in our sample.

The first variation in the selection process lies in concerns the development of position announcements and selection criteria. This step was not mentioned in all our cases. When it was, there were two alternatives: criteria set by board committee or board, or criteria set by director (with or without help of other supervisory officers).

As indicated in numerous sections of this report, some school systems prefer to recruit locally, while others advertise supervisory officer positions outside (provincially, nationally) as well as inside the board. As explained by one director of education, this is not necessarily an either/or policy. His administration limits recruitment to local candidates only if they know that they have qualified people available for the position; otherwise the recruitment process is opened up to the outside.

An important variation in recruitment procedures is whether or not the supervisory officer positions are formally advertised. Respondents in one large board reported that the last two positions in their board were not officially advertised, and that they only became aware of the openings through the local grapevine.

There appears to be considerable variation across the province in the sources and amount of data about supervisory officer candidates used in the hiring process. The standard data configuration is the applicant's curriculum vitae, record of supervisory officer qualifications, and the interview. In addition, some boards require samples of written materials (e.g., reports, statement of philosophy of education), recommendations, and, in one case, even local performance appraisal records.

Local screening practices for reviewing applications for supervisory officer positions and for developing short lists are highly variable. In some school systems the director of education screens applications before they reach the official selection committee. The screening process may or may not include screening interviews and reference checks, in addition to review of paper documentation. Where screening interviews are conducted, the selection committee develops a short-list after the initial interview and submits the names (typically 3) to the board. Final interviews are conducted with short-listed candidates by the full board. Where screening interviews are not conducted, the selection committee develops a short list based on paper qualifications (and reference checks), interviews the short-listed candidates, and submits its recommendation for board (or the director's) approval.

The official interview process itself varies in different boards in terms of who is involved (trustees, officials, both), how much weight is given to it (the primary basis for selection vs one of several key sources of information), and how long it lasts (e.g., 20 minutes, 1 hour), and how many applicants are interviewed (all, only those short-listed).

There are major variations in the role of the director in the selection process. The most dramatic contrast is between boards where the director in consultation with other officials makes the selection and then just submits the appointment to the board for approval, and those where the director acts in an advisory role to trustees throughout the process. Other variations in the role of directors in local supervisory officer hiring include whether they personally recruit applicants, whether they screen applications for the trustees, and whether they act as advisors or as full participants with a vote on hiring committees. The other side of the picture is the role of trustees. Their role ranges from approval of the director's recommendation to involvement in recruitment, screening, interviewing, and decision-making.

Examples of some of the different supervisory officer hiring processes described are depicted in Table 7-1. Again we caution that these simply illustrate the range of variation encountered. We do not claim that the examples are typical of specific boards.

Improving local selection processes

On the whole, supervisory officers were less critical of their local hiring practices than of the selection process for initial certification as a supervisory officer. The impression gathered across the sample is that more attention should be given to improving the quality of the applicant pool than to tinkering with local hiring practices. Specifically, there is wide consensus across all boards and supervisory officer role groups that in addition to qualifying exams, certification of academic supervisory officers should include some kind of internship and training courses focused on practical issues. For business supervisory officers, there is consensus that the current exams and education experience requirements exclude many qualified candidates and do nothing to enhance the qualifications of those that do get certified through that process. Business officials themselves are split on the need for a separate training and certification process, replacing the exams altogether with a training program combining internships, courses and on-the-job experiences, or simply opening up the business stream to non-academic candidates with good business qualifications. With regard to improving local supervisory officer hiring processes, there are a few recurrent themes in the interview data. These are mainly concerned with selection-linked training, the screening procedures, clarifying uncertainty in the selection process and role

Table 7-1: Examples of Hiring Processes for Local Supervisory Officer Selection

Example A: Interviews and recommendations by committee

	Variation A.1 (medium-separate)	Variation A.2 (small-separate)
Criteria setting:	Selection committee	Board
Advertising:	Provincially	Nationally
Screening:	Selection committee applicants reviews applications	Director prescreens
Short listing:	Selection committee develops short list	Selection committee develops short list
Final interviews:	Selection committee interviews candidates	Selection committee interviews candidates
Decision:	Selection committee makes recommendation to board	Selection committee makes recommendation to board
	Board approves	Board approves

Example B: Interviews by committee and full board

	Variation B.1 (medium-public)	Variation B.2 (large-separate)
Criteria setting:		
Advertising:	Provincially	Locally
Screening:	Prescreening by director; reference check of selected candidates by director	
	Board committee (trustees) interviews 8-10 candidates	Board committee (trustees) interviews all candidates
Short listing:	Board committee short-lists 3 candidates	Board committee short-lists 3 candidates
	Further reference checks by director	
Final interviews:	Full board	Full board
Decision:	Full board vote	Full board vote

Example C: Appointment by director

	Variation C.1 (large-separate)	Variation C.2 (small-public)
Criteria setting:		
Advertising:	Locally	None
Screening:	Screening committee selects (deputy director and others) interviews candidates	None
Short listing:	Screening committee develops short list	None
Decision:	Screening committee makes recommendations to director	Director personally recruits and appoints someone to the job
	Director makes decision	

expectations for supervisory officers, developing a larger pool of applicants, and controlling the role of trustees.

While administrative internships and practical training courses were most often mentioned in the context of additional certification requirements, some supervisory officers talked about linking these professional development experiences with local selection processes for specific supervisory officer positions. One version is to provide short-term administrative internships/apprenticeships and courses in dealing with practical issues (not the Education Act) for potential local applicants on an ongoing basis. This would increase the professional skills of the good ones, help identify those needing assistance, and generate more relevant data about individual performance capabilities. Another version is to require new supervisory officers to participate in internships and courses after their appointment. Both these alternatives are being used across the province in some of the large boards, and respondents from those boards were generally pleased with the results.

The most common issue identified is the perceived need in many boards to improve the applicant screening process by broadening the base of information used in establishing short lists and making hiring recommendations. In short, most supervisory officers believe decision-makers need access to more information about the candidates than can be obtained from a curriculum vitae, an interview, and records of supervisory officer certification. Examples of other kinds of information suggested include samples of written work (reports produced, statement of personal philosophy of education), more information about accomplishments and track record, multiple recommendations from past supervisors, performance appraisal records, and on-the-job observation. At least for entry-level supervisory officers, restructuring the certification process to include internships and training courses would in itself increase the data base for screening applicants for specific positions. Supervisory officers from a number of boards called attention to the fact that more documentation is required for the selection of principals than of supervisory officers.

Central (mainly personnel) and area supervisory officers in several boards called for the reduction of uncertainty in the overall selection process. The criticisms are not typical of any particular type of board, but they do cluster within specific boards. In other words, where the local hiring process is not standardized in writing or by consensus, and is subject to variation each time around, supervisory officers call for clarification, consensus and formalization. Another frequently stated recommendation is the need to establish clearer job descriptions and role expectations for supervisory officers to use as guides and standards for selection. This recommendation is not limited to boards with uncertain or unsettled selection processes.

While not generalized across the sample, a subset of supervisory officers interviewed did express the opinion that something should be done to develop a bigger pool of applicants. This recommendation was particularly common among supervisory officers with responsibilities for French-language education in medium and small boards, and for some officers in boards that traditionally limit recruitment to local applicants. The need for larger applicant pools was also noted by a few central supervisory officers in large boards. Respondents in those contexts, however, were not referring to the size of the entry-level applicant pool but to the range of candidates available for more senior positions. The hierarchical ranking and compartmentalization of supervisory officer positions by division in large boards has the effect of reducing the number of potential applicants for senior positions. Suggestions included flattening the hierarchies to establish greater parity among supervisory officer positions, and increasing the practice of lateral promotions across department/divisions to give supervisory officers a more diversified range of experience. Business officials also agree on the need to widen their applicant pool by changing the entry requirements for certification of business officials. This, however, is more a question of changing provincial regulations than local hiring procedures.

Several respondents complained that trustees have too much control in the hiring process, relative to senior administrators. This criticism is restricted mainly to boards where the director does not control or at least have a strong voice in the short-list selection. Where that kind of administrative control on screening is lacking, the process is likely to be described as too political. Respondents also voiced the concern that, left to their own discretion, trustees might pick people that do not fit in with the rest of the administration. One supervisory officer said trustees should be given training in effective selection and hiring practices.

As a group, the business supervisory officers had even fewer criticisms and suggestions for improving local selection processes than their colleagues in other supervisory positions. Some said they were satisfied with existing procedures; most others offered no recommendations. Among medium and small boards, business officials are more likely to say that improving local selection procedures for their roles is not really an issue, because there is so little turnover in these jobs.

A number of other recommendations for improving local selection for specific supervisory officer positions were made. Some were directed towards particular local circumstances. Others have the potential for more general applicability. We call attention to a number of the latter in the interest of stimulating further thought and discussion about improvements in hiring processes: implement affirmative action programs to recruit more women (and minorities); include women on search committees; hire supervisory officers with expertise for particular needs in the board rather than for standard position categories; identify and develop a plan for a new supervisory officers' professional development needs in the hiring process; make supervisory officer appointments probationary for a year or two; establish a separate certification training and selection process for directorships.

Finally, not all supervisory officers were critical of their local hiring practices. This seemed to be board-specific in that in certain boards the supervisory officers considered as a group said they were generally satisfied with the process. Since we did not gather supplemental data on the actual processes followed from board to board, we cannot infer the characteristics of a "satisfactory process" from the vantage point of supervisory officers. Of course, participant satisfaction cannot be equated with organizational effectiveness in relation to the selection of the most appropriate candidate.

7.1.4. Attraction of the supervisory officer job

In order to gain additional insight into factors influencing the selection of supervisory officers the interview guide posed a question concerning the attractiveness of supervisory officer jobs and the extent to which they were attracting good candidates. "Are supervisory officer jobs perceived as attractive?" The number of supervisory officers (other than business) who said the jobs are perceived as attractive was about equal to those who said they are not. The proportion who felt the jobs are *not* attracting the best candidates, however, was greater than those who said they are. The implication is that people who might make good supervisory officers either are not applying or are not passing the supervisory officer exams. One supervisory officer referred to the outcome of a course to help interested principals and teachers in his board prepare for supervisory officer exams. Thirty attended the course, but none passed the supervisory officer examination. Most supervisory officers agree that the exam certification process is a poor measure of the leadership potential of candidates for supervisory officer positions (see Chapter 10). In brief, personal ambition and the ability to pass the test are not the key qualities of good leaders.

While no one claimed that all applicants for supervisory officer jobs are competent, some are satisfied that the applicant pool includes enough good ones to fill the positions as they come up. Others believe that many of the best potential candidates for supervisory officer positions do not even apply. The

reasons given for why many school personnel do not find the job attractive, and why good candidates fail to apply are basically the same.

Two major problems are cited. One relates to the exams, the other to the relative unattractiveness of the supervisory officer position (compared, for example, to being a principal). According to some supervisory officers, the qualifying exams deter or block some good principals and teachers from seeking supervisory officer positions. A key issue is the feeling that the exams measure a candidate's ability to memorize and recall facts, not the administrative and leadership skills he or she needs to be an effective supervisory officer. The exams are viewed as poor measures of actual problem-solving abilities, either because of inconsistencies across interviews (reliability) and/or because the exam does not measure problem-solving (validity). A number of those interviewed said they knew of principals with good leadership potential who failed the written or oral test. The exams are widely seen as an obstacle to the recruitment of good people for business positions. People criticize the exams as too academic and removed from the kinds of skills and competencies required of good business officials.

The second major problem is that the principal's job is seen as more attractive than the supervisory officer's job by many principals and teachers. The following excerpt from an interview with a central supervisory officer explains why the principal's job is seen as better, and typifies comments from interviews across the sample:

> "Is it worth it? My belief is the principal's job is a better one, more time off, fewer extra hours, lack of differential pay, close to the kids, lots of room for initiative, more discretion, not all of the board meetings and tasks, etc. Supervisory officer work is less satisfying than being a principal. It is harder for supervisory officers to know whether they are affecting kids. Are we attracting the right leaders for the supervisory officer positions? I don't know, but a lot of people who would make good supervisory officers don't seek it because they think the principal role is better. In order to be a good supervisory officer you have to find joy in being a principal. If you find joy in a principalship you don't seek the supervisory officer position and troubled times. Too much work and hassle for too little gain."

In short, looking at the supervisory officer role, many school personnel see the stresses and strains, extra work, loss of personal time, loss of autonomy, loss of contact with what's happening in schools, and minimal gains in terms of money and status. The presumed satisfactions and rewards are not so obvious. In fact, several supervisory officers think the role might be made more attractive if the job were more clearly defined and if there were some means to help teachers and principals gain a better understanding of what supervisory officers do and the satisfaction they experience (see Chapter 8: Satisfaction and stress). In one of the large school boards, however, supervisory officers repeatedly said that the reality of their jobs was a real let-down in terms of the unanticipated constraints on what a supervisory officer can do.

The most frequently mentioned disincentives are the lack of substantial pay differential between principals and supervisory officers, and the loss of personal time (vacation, evening work). Many potential supervisory officer candidates just do not think the job is worth it. The disincentives are thought to be greater for secondary than for elementary principals. Supervisory officers from a number of boards emphasized that secondary principals in their systems have equal or more status than supervisory officers, more autonomy and greater administrative challenge, and in some cases, a bigger salary than an entry-level supervisory officer. Finally, supervisory officers from across the sample voiced the opinion that the supervisory officer job used to be more attractive to principals and teachers than now. They did not elaborate on the causes of the shift in perception.

7.1.5. Business officers as directors

On the questionnaire and in the interviews, supervisory officers were asked whether they thought supervisory officers from the business career path are qualified to fill the director's position. The numerical analysis of questionnaire responses indicates 76 per cent against and 24 per cent for the appointment of business officers to the directorship. Interview responses were consistent with this pattern, though there was some variation by major role group. Among the directors interviewed, only two said "yes" to the appointment of business supervisory officers to their positions. Among the business supervisory officers interviewed, 44 per cent expressed at least conditional approval to the appointment of business officials to the directorship.

Interviewees from all role groups and boards are consistent in their explanations of why they think business officials would not make good directors. Three major themes are evident. First, a director has to have an academic background in order to have credibility with staff in the system and make educationally sound decisions. Second, a director needs to have classroom teaching experience in order to understand the realities experienced by teachers and students in schools. The phrase "teaching experience is vital" crops up again and again. Curiously, only four central supervisory officers and directors, and two business officials, justified the exclusion of business supervisory officers in terms of lack of principal experience. The third theme follows from the others. Central supervisory officers, in particular, voiced fear that business supervisory officers would give greater weight to the fiscal implications than to the educational implications of their decisions.

As reported in the numerical analysis, a significant minority of supervisory officers (24 per cent) does believe business officials could fill the director's shoes. Although business officials account for the majority of this group, there are a small number from each of the other groups as well (e.g., central, program, operations, student services, personnel, area supervisory officers). Among the minority saying "yes", two groups are identified in the interviews. Some, particularly business officials, give an unqualified nod of approval. These supervisory officers maintain that the director's job is mostly organizational and political and requires little program expertise. They emphasize that good directors can hire program people to fill the gap without compromising the quality of education in the system. The other group of supervisory officers concurring with the prospect of business supervisory officers as directors gave conditional responses. They said business officers can serve as effective directors *if* they have an understanding of the educational side of the system. Some said they knew of individuals in the business streams who could do it, but they did not generalize to the business group as a whole. Overall, we conclude that there is little support for the appointment of business officials to the position of director, even among those responding positively to this possibility.

7.2. Training

The researchers employed several methods in an attempt to form a picture of the kinds of professional training and experiences most relevant to the performance of the supervisory officer jobs. On the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate the importance (essential, desirable, not helpful) of specific categories of professional training and experience teacher training/experience; principal training/experience. Supplementary data on such matters as educational qualifications and concentration of school experience (elementary, secondary, both) were also requested. In the interviews, supervisory officers were asked to describe what sources and aspects of their personal training and experience were relevant and irrelevant to their *current* job, what aspects of their job they were not well prepared for, and what kinds of professional development or support they found most useful generally, and at this point in their career.

This section on the professional development of supervisory officers is organized as follows: review of numerical analysis; most relevant preparation; irrelevant preparation; gaps in preparation; useful professional development and support.

7.2.1. The numerical analysis

Most of the supervisory officers sampled in our study have advanced degrees; 82 per cent of respondents to the questionnaire (N = 222) have a master's degree or doctorate.

Respondents were asked to rate the relative importance of five categories of professional training. The percentages identifying these categories as "essential" (versus desirable or not helpful) were as follows:

Teacher training	86%
Business or management training	29%
Principal training	66%
Special training for Supervisory Officers	58%
Graduate Studies	60%

The 86 per cent response for teacher training conflicts with interview data that suggest that teacher training is irrelevant. The high "essential" rating for this category can be explained, we believe, by the likelihood that what respondents deem essential are teacher certification and experience rather than teacher training itself.

With the exception of business Officials, most supervisory officers acquire their experience strictly within the educational sector. Survey respondents were asked to rate the relative importance of various types of professional experiences. As might be expected, teaching experience (87 per cent) and school administration (79 per cent) were highly rated as "essential". Only 5 per cent indicated that Ministry of Education experience was essential, but 84 per cent said it would be desirable.

Half the supervisory officers surveyed said the concentration of their school experience was in the elementary panel. A third acquired most of their school experience in secondary schools, and 14 per cent reported a balance between the two.

7.2.2. Relevant preparation

The supervisory officers interviewed were asked what sources of their *training* and their *experience* seem most relevant to their *current* jobs. As a prelude to our analysis, two generalizations can be made on the basis of their responses. First, supervisory officers attribute most of their relevant preparation to work experiences, not to formal training. Second, the only consistently valued source of formal training is graduate study.

Matthew *et al.'s* (1980) earlier findings about the availability of training and professional development opportunities for supervisory officers help put our data into perspective. In their questionnaire they asked respondents to indicate which of 12 activities or opportunities was available. The four most readily available professional development opportunities were "experience in a position of

responsibility, "diversity of experience", "independent study", and ministry materials. These were followed by graduate and undergraduate courses and group study with candidates for certification. Activities listed by a third or less of the respondents included conferences, supervised work experiences, special courses, employer supervised workshops, and external agency workshops. Matthew *et al.* also asked their survey respondents to note the perceived importance of the 12 professional development opportunities. They found that opportunities for experience scored higher than formal education activities.

Relevant training

For each major academic role group -- directors, central supervisory officers, area supervisory officers -- graduate study is the one source of formal education frequently cited as relevant to success in the supervisory officers' current jobs. Among business officers, training to become a chartered accountant, or earning a degree in commerce, business administration, etc., is the single common source of job relevant education. Graduate studies in education or business are mentioned by only four business officials.

Criticisms of graduate studies were directed towards specific courses, not to the experience as a whole. Theory courses, for example, are more valued when their application to practice is clearly evident. Interviewees talked about the insight, broadening of perspective, new skills, and disciplined thinking they gained as a result of their graduate studies. They also spoke in highly positive terms about the opportunity that graduate education provided for interaction with other education professionals and education researchers. The reported relevance of graduate studies did vary by position among central supervisory officers. The frequency of mention by program supervisory officers was greater than for other position groups (operations, personnel). It may be that curriculum supervisory officers are simply more likely to pursue advanced degrees than those in the other administrative divisions.

Most other sources of formal professional training were absent from the list of relevant preparation. Undergraduate teacher education was named once. The principals' course was reported as useful only by a few area supervisory officers, -- not surprising since these officers are generally closer to the principalship in terms of both their career histories, and their daily contacts with school personnel. As with teacher training, there is a sharp discrepancy between the proportion of supervisory officers indicating on the survey that principal training is essential (66 per cent), and those in interviews who report its direct relevance to their current work as supervisory officers.

The vast majority of supervisory officers in our sample did not list the certification process as relevant to their jobs. Only five mentioned the supervisory officer exams, and among these five, most referred to the value of specific local preparatory courses or study groups. In their interviews with supervisory officers, Partlow *et al.* (1980) asked their opinion of the value of the present certificate route. Among *experienced* supervisory officers, 59 per cent (N = 51) expressed dissatisfaction. Our data suggest that the proportion of these that believe the certification process is a valuable component of supervisory officer preparation has diminished. In their 1980 report, Partlow *et al.* reported widespread support for the possibility of supervised work experiences and internship in the initial preparation of supervisory officers. In our interviews, only a small number of supervisory officers spoke positively about their participation in administrative internships, but the number of supervisory officers who have had access to this type of training is very small.

Of course, supervisory officers also talked about the benefits and relevance of different inservice opportunities -- workshops, seminars, courses, conferences -- provided locally or through external agencies (e.g., OAEAO, OCLEA, OASBO, ministry, NASSP). Their comments may be summarized in three statements. First, the number of supervisory officers listing inservice activities and programs was far less

than the number listing graduate studies (or business education among business officials). In other words, as a general category of professional training, inservice experiences are not prominently mentioned for their relevance to supervisory officer jobs. Second, when supervisory officers talk about the benefits of inservice for themselves, they tend to list specific inservice experiences which they found useful. Third, it is not the agency or the organizational structure (e.g., workshop, course) that defines the commonality of relevant inservice professional development for supervisory officers. Rather, it is the content and certain qualitative aspects of inservice that are important, such as their relation to practical concerns, their intensity, and opportunities for peer interaction. These aspects are reviewed in more depth later under "Useful professional development and support".

Relevant experience

The most relevant professional preparation for supervisory officers is acquired on the job. The comments of supervisory officers about job relevant experiences cluster in the following thematic categories:

- Osmosis, trial and error
- Mentoring
- Prior administrative experience
- Varied work experiences
- Extra responsibilities
- Opportunities for professional interaction
- People management
- Teaching experience

We review each of the thematic categories, and comment on similarities and differences across board type (large, medium, small) and role group (director, business, central, area) where appropriate.

Osmosis, trial and error

Supervisory officers in all categories and boards referred to the general process of learning on the job through watching their superiors and colleagues, by asking questions, and by trial and error. This is particularly evident when they speak of gaps in their initial preparation for supervisory officer jobs. In other words, when they describe how they compensated for shortfalls in their training and experience for particular functions or tasks (e.g., business matters, system planning, transportation or architecture issues), they are more likely to talk about having learned from colleagues or staff with the necessary expertise, than about looking for professional development activities to build up their skills. Of course, the messages they get from watching their colleagues at work are not always worth emulating. Three area supervisory officers said they were motivated to seek administrative positions because they thought they could do the job better than their superiors.

Mentoring

Some supervisory officers refer to learning on the job from particular mentors, such as a director, another supervisory officer, a principal, even a department head. We distinguish mentoring from formal internships, in that it does not appear to happen as part of a structured professional development program. (Of course, mentoring could be designed as a formal program.) We distinguish it from "osmosis" in that supervisory officers talk about benefitting from the guidance and direction of specific individuals, not just generally watching and listening to what their colleagues are doing. Judging from interview comments,

preparation by mentoring is not widespread, though there is role group variation. About a quarter of the directors interviewed said they had had one or more significant mentors in their administrative career. Only six supervisory officers described a mentoring experience.

Prior administrative experience

Prior administrative experience as a principal and as a supervisory officer is the most frequently and consistently mentioned category of relevant professional experience across boards and role groups other than business. There are some notable variations across roles and board size. The relevance of prior experience as a principal, for example, is commonly cited by directors, central and area supervisory officers in medium and small boards, while in large boards, neither director nor central supervisory officers list their experience as principals as highly relevant to their current position. Approximately 50 per cent of the area supervisory officers interviewed in large boards, however, referred to their experience as principals in response to this question. This suggests that in large boards, the responsibilities of senior superintendents are (1) qualitatively if not quantitatively different from those of their peers in medium and small boards, and (2) more dissociated from the activities of principals than for supervisory officers in smaller jurisdictions.

Prior experience as a supervisory officer is, of course, regarded as relevant experience, whether in the same board, in other boards, or with the ministry. Predictably, the proportion of directors (one-third) listing prior experience as a supervisory officer is greater than for the more junior supervisory officer positions.

Business supervisory officers are the only group whose members consistently refer to former professional experience in business, industry or public administration outside of education (mentioned by 40 per cent of those interviewed).

Varied work experiences

Supervisory officers in all categories (except business) and boards refer to the relevance and value of having a wide variety of work experiences inside and outside their current board. We note, however, that variety of experience was not commonplace despite the value placed on it by our respondents. This variety of experience when it does occur manifests itself in several ways: experience in more than one school system; experience in various administrative divisions and positions; experience in staff as well as administrative jobs; experience in both panels and in several schools; experience with the ministry; experience in professional associations; and work experience outside education. As explained in our interviews, the value of having work experiences in a variety of schools or systems, and in positions with distinctly different sets of responsibilities (e.g., program supervisory officer, personnel supervisory officer, curriculum coordinator), has less to do with skill acquisition than with the development of a "system perspective". The exposure to multiple contexts and situations, challenges, responsibilities, issues, and people with varied views and expertise helps a supervisory officer gain a sense of the dynamics of the education system as a whole, and an appreciation of its range of issues and concerns. While this aspect of experience is salient for all role groups, it is particularly important for directors in large boards. Work experiences in more than one school system, in various supervisory officer roles, and in many schools are more highly regarded by large-board directors than their experiences as principals. Curriculum experience, either on committees or as coordinators/consultants, is specifically mentioned by some supervisory officers. References to the source of experience, however, are limited to central program supervisory officers, and to a few area supervisory officers in particular boards. According to some of those supervisory officers, the value of work in staff curriculum positions also derives from the opportunity it provides for contact with many different schools.

Additional responsibilities

Taking on additional responsibilities contributes to the professional preparation of supervisory officers in much the same way as working in varied positions and settings. It adds to the officer's repertoire of experiences with different components, aspects and issues in the education system, thereby helping develop a system perspective. Participation in special projects or committees within the board or provincially also provides experience in the performance of system-level tasks associated with the supervisory officer role (i.e., managing meetings, writing reports, long-range planning), tasks which aspiring principals and junior supervisory officers have to learn to do to be competent. Moreover, the assumption of extra responsibilities provides visibility and facilitates the development of personal networks throughout a school system. Not surprisingly, the importance of this type of experience, i.e., involvement in system projects, is most evident for area supervisory officers in large school boards. It seems clear from these data, and from the previously reported data on why supervisory officers thought they were selected, that involvement in projects at the central office and provincial levels is one route by which principals and teachers gain the experience and recognition needed to get a supervisory officer job in the first place.

Opportunities for professional interaction

Another theme is the availability of opportunities for professional interaction with personnel working in diverse settings (same and different boards, elementary and secondary schools, ministry, teacher federation) and roles (curriculum staff, business and planning personnel, principals and teachers, ministry and federation officials). Although this theme is obviously related to the previous two, it emphasizes the value of exposure to people with differing perspectives on similar issues, and with different kinds of expertise. It also has to do with the cultivation of personal networks of information and resources, which are part and parcel of the professional development of supervisory officers.

People management

Learning to work with people is a frequently voiced kind of experience and training relevant to the work of supervisory officers, including business officials. It is a theme common to many different categories of professional experience and training; supervisory officers need to be good people managers. Although there is no single source of preparation for that aspect of their role, the following are mentioned: experience as a principal or guidance counselor or in special education; the ministry principal course; inservice workshops and courses (OCLEA, OAEAO, OASBO); assistance from OISE Field Centre staff; and personal relationships in and outside of education.

Teaching experience

Classroom teaching is rarely listed as relevant experience for supervisory officer work except by approximately one-sixth of the area supervisory officers (all from large boards). It is mentioned even less frequently by central supervisory officers, directors, and business officers. The difference probably stems from the fact that area supervisory officers tend to be in closer contact with principals and teachers than senior superintendents. Overall, the interview responses on the relevance of teacher training and teaching experience do not confirm the survey data (See 7.2.1). It appears that supervisory officers believe teaching experience is necessary in order to understand and help teachers, but that teaching skills are not relevant to the functions of a supervisory officer. Rather than teaching experience, a few supervisory officers said they benefitted from their involvement as presenters at workshops and principals' courses. It is not the teaching aspect they emphasize, but the opportunity provided for learning and consolidating their thoughts about a particular topic or concern.

In summary, supervisory officers get most of their relevant preparation from experiences on the job. A lot of it comes informally by observing and asking colleagues, and through trial and error. A fortunate few develop a mentor relationship with a respected superior. The most relevant aspects of their experience include prior administrative positions, opportunities for work in a variety of settings and different types of jobs, the assumption of extra responsibilities for the system, access to professional interaction with others, and opportunities to learn and develop human-relations skills. Teaching experience is not widely held to be a key preparatory experience for supervisory officer work. The only frequently mentioned source of relevant formal training is graduate studies.

Irrelevant experience

The most common response to the query about aspects of training and experience which were irrelevant to the job is that nothing is irrelevant. This opinion was voiced by nearly half the directors and 40 per cent of both business officers and area supervisory officers, and was the only response given with any frequency by central supervisory officers. A considerable number criticized the supervisory officer exam process as irrelevant, while others saw it as necessary (see Chapter 10). Three officers in each major role group (director, central, and area supervisory officers) said their undergraduate teacher training was of little use to their responsibilities as supervisory officers. A few declared that some graduate courses and workshops they had attended were irrelevant, and that the principals' course had little practical value. The pattern that emerges is that supervisory officers refer almost exclusively to aspects of their formal training, not to aspects of their work experience, when reflecting on the most irrelevant facets of their preparation for supervisory officer work. Business supervisory officers pointed to irrelevant areas of their business education and training prior to entering the education system (e.g., taxation, banking, certain types of accounting).

7.2.3. Gaps in preparation

The interview guide included a question about gaps between the supervisory officers' preparation and the demands of their current position. Reported gaps in preparation (training and experience) cluster broadly into three groups: (1) new areas of responsibility; (2) increased magnitude of responsibility; and (3) basic management skills.

Supervisory officers in all major role groups singled out tasks or areas of responsibility for which they were not well prepared. Those most commonly reported are working with trustees and political issues, report writing under pressure, business and finance, and system perspectives. Prior business training and experience notwithstanding, many business officials cited gaps in preparation in school business administration generally or in specific areas of responsibility, such as plant, transportation, purchasing and special education. As one put it, "accounting experience is too limited". Lack of preparation for business matters and politics is more salient among directors than among Central and area supervisory officers. Other new tasks or responsibilities mentioned by at least some officials in each major role group include report preparation, policy development, and personnel matters, particularly in relation to union contracts and disciplining staff. Insufficient legal knowledge was cited by directors and central office supervisory officers from a few small and medium boards. Some gaps were more characteristic of central and area supervisory officers than directors: curriculum or special education background, system planning, transportation and building matters, and experience in both panels. Some respondents in all supervisory officer groups reported that they did not have a clear perception of the range of responsibilities associated with their current position when they were appointed. In other words, lack of initial role clarity was identified as another kind of gap in preparation.

Supervisory officers also talked about inadequate preparation for the increased magnitude of responsibilities associated with their jobs. Staffing and budget, for example, are things most of them had to deal with as principals, but never on the scale of an area or system. Area supervisory officers, in particular, talk about a lack of preparation for the shift to a system orientation. On the one hand, this has to do with a shift in emphasis from particular teachers and students in the classroom to management concerns affecting all schools, and on the other, with the realization that the supervisory officer is "not the principals' person in the administration".

Finally, some supervisory officers in each role group listed gaps in general management skills, such as human relations and conflict resolution, time management, problem solving, and running meetings. Area supervisory officers are most likely to talk about their initial lack of preparation for how to make change happen and what to do with teachers who refuse to change. This preoccupation is not surprising since official responsibility for policy and program implementation typically rests with the line supervisory officers closest to the schools.

What is most noteworthy is that most of the skills that people consider vital are the ones most likely to be identified as representing gaps in preparation (see Chapter 9).

7.2.4. Useful professional development and support

The interview guide included one question about the characteristics of "valuable" professional development, and another about the kinds of professional development and support useful at this stage in the supervisory officer's career. Responses to the first question overlapped considerably with those to the second, and also with supervisory officer comments about relevant preparation. We have incorporated these responses into a single analytical focus on the characteristics of "useful professional development and support". The discussion is organized in terms of useful content, forms and strategies of professional development, agents (providers, participants), and issues.

Useful professional development content

Four areas of professional development content are commonly mentioned by supervisory officers in all major role groups and all types of board. These are *management and leadership skills*, *human relations*, *dealing with practical problems and issues*, and *current educational directions and trends* at the policy and classroom levels. With regard to practical content, a subset of supervisory officers in each group talked about the usefulness of working on actual projects in professional development contexts. Business officials commonly express an interest and need for information on the uses of new information technologies for school system administration. The only other area of professional development need specific to this group is finance.

Some professional development content priorities were mainly common to central and/or area supervisory officers. Personnel issues such as teacher supervision, hiring, and negotiations were mentioned by a number of central (program, personnel) and area supervisory officers. High interest in change management and more specifically, in curriculum implementation (curriculum, review, development and implementation) was limited to area supervisory officers. That management of curriculum change was mentioned by only one curriculum superintendent is surprising. It may be that most curriculum superintendents are still more closely aligned with program development than implementation. The area supervisory officers' desire for information on change management no doubt reflects their traditional line responsibility for getting new programs put into practice. Of course there are a lot of professional development topics mentioned by only one or two central and area supervisory officers, such as microcomputers in the classroom, special education, pupil evaluation, and school law.

Two areas are conspicuous by the infrequency of mention. First is business and finance among non-business supervisory officers -- a topic among the most common gaps in personal preparation cited by directors, central and area officials. The second concerns the lack of reference to topics related to intellectual stimulation and personal growth; when supervisory officers talk about useful and valuable professional development content, they tend to focus on things directly related to the job.

Useful forms/strategies of professional development

When asked about useful professional development and support, the supervisory officers named a wide variety of conventional and non-conventional forms. The focus is on forms of professional development and support available and useful to incumbent supervisory officers. The list of useful forms of professional development desired is as follows (in order of frequency of mention):

- Peer networking and consultation
- Personal reading
- Peer group retreats
- Giving workshops/courses
- Project work
- Study leave
- External consultants
- Courses/seminars
- Workshops
- Conferences
- Professional association work
- Peer exchanges
- Videotapes

The data clearly indicate the primacy of personal contacts over traditional forms of professional development (i.e., conferences, workshops) as valued sources of professional development and support. The characteristics they highlight reflect many of the same qualities that make personal contact with other supervisory officers so valued.

We have chosen to highlight themes which emerge from supervisory officer comments about the useful forms of peer contact and inservice activities. Our argument is that from the perspective of incumbent supervisory officers, a useful support system for professional development would provide a balance of the following elements: opportunities for *peer contact and support; interactive learning; intensive inservice* activities; a *practical* focus; and opportunities for *personal reflection* stimulated by new experiences, new ideas, and research knowledge.

The usefulness of peer contact and support is a primary theme. Supervisory officers repeatedly mention the value of opportunities to learn with and from other officers. This theme is manifest in reference to the usefulness of peer group discussions, peer networking, peer retreats, peer visitation, professional association work, and participation in formal training activities (conferences, workshops, courses). Supervisory officers emphasize the value of contacts with supervisory officers from outside their boards, as well as from within. Nonetheless, our impression was that opportunity for serious peer learning and interaction was severely restricted for supervisory officers.

Another theme is the preference for situations that engage supervisory officers in interactive learning. They like to discuss the topics, problems, or issues that interest them with colleagues and external experts (e.g., university professors, ministry officials). Courses, workshops, retreats, etc., that provide for active participation are more highly valued than those that do not.

Many supervisory officers indicate a preference for intensive professional development and problem-solving activities, such as workshop series, workshops that go on for more than a day, short courses (1-2 weeks) focusing on a single theme, weekend retreats and organized discussion sessions dealing with specific issues and concerns. They like opportunities and time to focus on, discuss and think about professional development topics and practical concerns in more than a superficial way.

References to peer group discussion sessions, networking, retreats, peer visitation and project work are all in the context of sharing ideas, and working together on practical problems and issues. When they talk about workshops and courses, supervisory officers describe their usefulness in terms of the practical value of the information and skills transmitted. In addition to peer collaboration on practical concerns, the officers recognize and value opportunities for individual reflective learning. Personal professional reading, for example, was the third most frequently cited form of useful professional developmental support. Opportunities for occasional study leaves are also mentioned.

Agents

The interview data do not indicate that any of the traditional providers of professional development for supervisory officers (e.g., OAEAO, OCLEA, ministry, OASBO, OISE) are regarded as more useful than others. (This question was not specifically asked.) Rather, professional development support from any source is judged in terms of the themes just described. The message is clear that supervisory officers place more value on professional development interaction with other officers than on activities in heterogenous groupings, with teachers, principals, or trustees.

Issues

Lack of time for such things as peer group discussion sessions, peer visitation, and personal reading and reflection is the one major issue identified by supervisory officers across our sample.

The second issue is the lack of systematic professional development programs. Virtually none of the supervisory officers interviewed talked about the actual or potential value of systematic professional development strategies and programs for them. It seems that few boards have systematic professional development programs for supervisory officers, and that few officers have given much thought to this possibility for themselves or others (except in the context of induction and certification).

7.3. Performance appraisal of supervisory officers

The boards in our sample were asked to provide us with local performance appraisal documents for directors and other supervisory officers. Of the 26 boards surveyed, 12 (46 per cent) submitted documents, two provided performance review documents for the director of education, some for supervisory officers under the director, and some for both. Eight of the boards gave copies of official performance appraisal policies and procedures. A more reliable estimate of the number of boards with official policies for performance appraisal of supervisory officers in Ontario is reported in Lawton *et al.* (1986). They obtained performance appraisal documents on all certificated education staff from all boards. As of November 1982, 42 per cent of all school boards had adopted policies for evaluating superintendents and 36 per cent for directors.

In the interviews, we did ask supervisory officers how they knew whether they were effective or not. Many made reference to the presence or absence of formal performance appraisals in response to that query. Comparisons between document samples and interview responses suggest the need for caution in interpreting data on existing performance review practices. Performance appraisal documents were not obtained from some boards where supervisory officers reported formal review procedures. Moreover, supervisory officers from several of the school systems that did submit performance appraisal documents said the procedures were not used on a regular basis. The matter is further complicated by reports from some supervisory officers that formal performance reviews were done, but were ineffectual as a meaningful source of feedback. Finally, in some systems which have formal review mechanisms for supervisory officers, the actual use of these procedures diminishes as one moves up through the administrative hierarchy. The uncertainty evident in these findings suggests that the existence of formal performance review procedures for supervisory officers cannot be considered a reliable indicator of their actual use or of their actual utility for those being evaluated.

Our sample of documents is too incomplete to make confident generalizations about the value of performance appraisal systems for supervisory officers where they exist. We can use these data, however, to illustrate the variation in the review procedures found in our sample. After analysis of the documents submitted, this section presents an analysis, by role, of interviewee responses to the question about what indicators supervisory officers use to judge their own performance.

7.3.1. Official performance reviews: Document analysis

Performance review documents for directors of education were submitted from two small, one medium, and three large boards. Three are samples of actual review forms, which do not identify the reviewers and review process. The other three included statements of purpose and review steps, in addition to the forms used. Samples and/or forms were also obtained for central and area supervisory officers in three medium and six large boards. This small sample exhibited considerable variation in the formal components and process of the reviews as reflected in performance appraisal documents. Similarities and differences in the examples provided for directors and other officials are summarized here in terms of ten aspects of the formal review process: (1) who does it; (2) how often it is done; (3) the purpose; (4) the data base; (5) factors examined; (6) criteria and standards; (7) assessment procedures; (8) recommendations; (9) dissemination; (10) process.

In some boards, the director and other supervisory officers go through an annual performance review. Reviews of the director may occur in conjunction with annual reports to the board required of directors of education under the Education Act. In other boards, formal performance reviews of supervisory officers are conducted only every two or three years. On the other end of the spectrum, interviewees from one medium board said they were evaluated three times a year. Documents from one large board stipulate reviews of supervisory officers by the director twice a year.

Directors and other supervisory officers are not reviewed by the same parties. Depending on the jurisdiction, directors may be evaluated by a board committee or by the full board. Trustees are not usually involved in the formal evaluation of other supervisory officers. In smaller boards, the director of education reviews the performance of all supervisory officers. In larger boards, with a hierarchy of supervisory officer positions, lower-level supervisory officers are evaluated by their immediate superiors and so on up the ladder to the senior division superintendents under the director.

Statements of purpose for performance reviews are included in the documents submitted from only three school systems. About all that can be said is that performance appraisals are expected to serve

multiple purposes. Some of the main ones listed include measuring goal achievement, developing commitment to the system, checking competency, and public accountability. Lawton *et al.* (1986) also identified many specific purposes for performance appraisal for certificated education staff (including but not limited to supervisory officers) across the province. Their data base included policy documents from all school boards, survey responses from 30 boards, and in-depth interviews in 8. They found that clarity about the purposes of appraisal diminishes as one moves up the hierarchy from teachers to superintendents, and that use of performance appraisal for review and dismissal of supervisory officers is virtually non-existent.

Depending on the board, information is typically gathered on one or another of three aspects of performance for directors and other supervisory officers: (1) achievement of the supervisory officers' annual goals and plans; (2) performance of official responsibilities; and/or (3) management and leadership skills. Long lists of management skills or competencies (50 to 70 items) based on contemporary research models of behaviours of effective superintendents provide the focus for the latter. These are grouped under headings such as leadership, management, planning, problem solving, communications, and relationships.

The basis for formally judging supervisory officer performance varies according to the aspects of performance being appraised. Agreed-upon written goals and plans are the most common benchmark for judging performance. The actual judgement of how well a director or other supervisory officer is accomplishing his goals and plans is usually based on a combination of oral (and sometimes written) self-report by the person evaluated and the professional opinion of those conducting the review. Mechanisms for consulting with other staff (e.g., principals and teachers) in the performance of a supervisory officer are indicated in the review procedures from one board only. In some school systems, numerical rating systems are used to assess goal-based, duty-based, and general managerial performance, e.g., (1) below requirements, (2) requires development; (3) meets requirements; (4) exceeds requirements, (5) outstanding. Operational definitions for different performance ratings, however, are included in the documentation from only one board. In the area of management skills, boards rely on descriptors of management behaviours which are supposedly indicative of good performance. Thus, a person scoring high on these categories is by definition an excellent supervisory officer. In most of the examples submitted, the reviewers' formal assessment consists of written comments. Others include numerical ratings of goal performance and management skills, which may or may not be aggregated into an overall performance index.

Again, our findings are consistent with those reported by Lawton *et al.* (1986). They found that interviewing is the most common form of data collection; that information (written or oral) is usually provided by the person under review (as opposed to someone else gathering information about performance); that achievement of objectives is the usual focus of assessment; and that explicit standards for judging the adequacy of a person's performance are often absent or unclear. Based on their analysis of written performance appraisal policies, Lawton *et al.* found that only a minority of boards (18) actually require written reports on the evaluation of superintendents. Some of the official performance appraisal documents obtained gave no indication of what kinds of recommendations might follow from a review. When recommendations are made, they are likely to focus on new/revised goals and plans, on recommendations for improvement through professional development, or in one case, transfer or promotion to another position. Only one of the supervisory officer policy statements obtained by Lawton *et al.* (1986) specified follow-up activities. In their survey of supervisory officers from 30 school boards, only 17 per cent of the superintendents (N = 114) and a small number of directors (7) reported any follow-up from the appraisal processes. In-depth interviews with supervisory officers in 8 boards confirmed that superintendents and directors were rarely able to point to major improvements as a result of appraisal.

The official performance appraisal process is outlined for directors and other supervisory officers in documents obtained from five school systems. Since in two of these, the official processes are not being used, according to our interviews, it seems pointless to use them as examples of how supervisory officer performance reviews work.

The data gathered in our study about formal performance appraisal procedures for supervisory officers are clearly not representative of the province as a whole. To get a more complete picture we must refer to existing studies of performance appraisal systems in Ontario school boards.

7.3.2. Indicators of effectiveness

In the interviews we asked supervisory officers to describe how they can tell how effective they are; what indicators they rely on to judge their own performances. Their responses are summarized here.

Directors

Feedback is more often informal than formal. Only four of the directors interviewed referred to formal performance reviews by the board. Several directors complained that they had a hard time getting trustees interested or seriously involved in management review, even though they themselves were in favour of it. Informal feedback from individual trustees is by far the most common form of board feedback to directors across our sample.

Informal feedback through casual communication with other supervisory officers, principals and teachers is the major source of performance indicators. It was mentioned by about 60 per cent of those directors interviewed. Some talk about listening to new people react to their decisions, seeing how things are running, and looking to see if people are comfortable (e.g., interpreting body language). A subset of directors said they judge their performance in part by how well their key administrative team is working together, and in part by feedback from its members.

Public reaction is another dimension of self-appraisal. Five directors mentioned the receipt of letters, personal compliments, community awards, and editorials. Another talked about the general reaction from the community he gets at public meetings. Of the twenty-five directors interviewed, only one said he uses system-level pupil achievement measures as one means of assessing his own effectiveness and that of his management team. None referred to direct or indirect measures of teacher effectiveness.

Central and area supervisory officers

A subset of central supervisory officers from five of the boards sampled said they get little feedback on their performance. Some described it as "a lonely job". The majority identified a variety of informal and, less frequently, formal performance indicators.

From the combined document and interview data, we estimate that approximately two-thirds of the school systems sampled in our study do not have formal performance appraisal procedures for supervisory officers, have them but do not use them, or are using formal review mechanisms regarded as useless by the supervisory officers involved.

Formal reviews by the board do not occur below the director level. Supervisory officers report informal feedback from individual trustees (comments, letters), and feedback on their recommendations and reports from board committees. Seeing one's decisions enacted by the board is taken as an indicator of success.

Informal feedback from other supervisory officers is commonly mentioned by central supervisory officers. This can take the form of compliments, requests for advice, requests to take charge of system tasks, and negative reactions as well. A number of central supervisory officers said they look for reactions among their colleagues to their input at administrative council meetings. Area superintendents, however, rarely mentioned peer feedback. Promotion (or lack of promotion) is another indirect indicator of personal success in the supervisory officer job. Feedback from one's own staff and/or overseeing the development of staff is mentioned as a major source of feedback by several central office supervisory officers.

The bulk of feedback for area supervisory officers comes from principals. Informal and/or formal feedback from principals was mentioned by area supervisory officers from eight different boards. Area supervisory officers differ from directors and other supervisory officers not only in the commonality and degree of emphasis placed on principals as a source of performance indicators, but also on the pro-active nature of the contact. Many of the area supervisory officers said they directly ask principals for feedback in meetings or in individual discussions. A few mentioned the use of survey instruments (e.g., checklists, questionnaires) to solicit principals' views.

In comparison to directors and central supervisory officers, the proportion of area supervisory officers citing informal feedback from teachers was appreciable (area supervisory officers from 5 boards), but not overwhelming and widespread. The same was true for the frequency of mention of informal feedback from parents.

Business officers

Business supervisory officers are about equally divided between those who say they are and those who are not subject to a formal performance appraisal by the director or a superordinate business official. Among those who are formally reviewed, three said they receive little feedback of any kind. The majority, however, cited a number of other indirect, as well as informal, performance indicators. Business officials from most boards referred to informal feedback from one or more sources.

The major sources of performance feedback for business officials (in addition to or in lieu of formal performance reviews) are trustees, the director of education, and to a lesser extent, colleagues and principals. Feedback from trustees is communicated mainly through acceptance (or rejection) of reports from the officials, or by informal individual comments. Business officials describe two types of directors, those who provide ongoing direct feedback on performance, and those who do it more informally and indirectly. References to the latter are more common. Business officials also talk about informal feedback, both positive and negative, from other supervisory officers. Several refer to routine communication with and the morale of their own staff.

Feedback and reactions from school personnel do not constitute a major source of performance data for business supervisory officers, nor do feedback from parents and the community at large.

Business officials from eight boards referred explicitly to reliance on personal judgement and their own sense of goal achievement. This is more characteristic of officials from large than medium and small boards. Some business officers said they use various sources of "hard" data to judge the effectiveness of what they do. These include the annual local financial statements and ministry audits.

As among other supervisory officer groups, a subset of business officials say that they gauge their effectiveness indirectly by the lack of complaints or the amount of open criticism associated with their actions.

No business supervisory officers make reference to any indicators of pupil performance or teacher effectiveness as measures of their own effectiveness.

7.3.3. Implications

Some of the implications are obvious. Clearer published criteria and procedures for selection, orientation or training, and review for members of interview teams should be part of standard procedures. Structurally, involving the whole board in interviews as happens in several cases seems excessive. More basically, boards (as some already do) should establish mid- or long-range leadership training programs. Such training programs should contain a variety of short-term apprenticeship opportunities for potential supervisory officers. Apprenticeship could be external as well as internal to the board in order to mitigate the tendency toward inbred experience. (Special grants or exchanges or other mechanisms would be required.) Apprenticeship would serve the triple purpose of giving potential supervisory officers a sense of the job, developing skills in association with a mentor, and providing an opportunity to assess the skills of future leaders.

There should also be a closer link between performance appraisal and professional development for supervisory officers. As it stands, there are few workable performance appraisal systems in place for supervisory personnel. When they do exist, they are more likely for principals and vice-principals than superintendents (see also Musella and Lawton, 1986). We would expect that professional development would focus on the skills and qualities described inChapter 9. It would start with the leadership training in the system. Selection should be linked with immediate professional development, that is, specific skill areas should be identified at the time of selection. These could then form the focus of internship and other professional development activities. Continuing performance appraisal should be conducted, provided that it is directly linked to skill areas and action or follow-through processes.

Finally, boards should develop a variety of system performance indicators of effectiveness, which could provide regular data for supervisory officers and others to review. Peer interaction focusing on objective information could be a powerful means of engaging supervisory officers, individually and collectively, in gaining a system perspective, assessing progress of the system, and seeing their own role and performance in relation to system development.

Chapter 8
Satisfaction and Stress

In Chapter 6, we examined the roles of supervisory officers, provided detailed analyses of the tasks which they perform, and explored the various environmental factors which may impinge upon the role. Since all of these factors affect the way supervisory officers work, some for the better, some not, the study has attempted to quantify and describe them. The present chapter looks at how supervisory officers themselves perceive the impact of such factors on their working lives.

8.1. Satisfiers

Supervisory officers were asked to think back over the last few months and recall which events or aspects of the job had been particularly satisfying to them. Most were able to cite several incidents or processes. Their responses were grouped to reflect common themes; these are listed in Table 8-1 in order of rank.

The most common satisfier mentioned by respondents was seeing an idea or initiative of their own come to fruition. For some this meant specific ideas which they had originated, for others it meant any task for which they had been given responsibility. The important commonality was that the respondent in each case felt an ownership of the project, and thus felt personal gratification when it was successful. A significant aspect of the accomplishment was the sense that it required considerable skill and negotiation to move the project through to completion. The second most common satisfier is not unlike the first. Many respondents said that they find the power and influence of the job satisfying. They like being in a position to make a pet project work, to use power for the benefit of others.

The third most common satisfier was the satisfaction derived from relationships with others, particularly from good working relationships with other supervisory officers. Some respondents mentioned that they particularly enjoy working with teachers and principals, others said they derive satisfaction from working successfully and compatibly with trustees. In general, area superintendents are somewhat more likely to derive satisfaction from working with teachers and principals, and central superintendents from working with colleagues -- tendencies that reflect the common working situation of each group.

Approximately one in every ten supervisory officers says that he/she derives satisfaction from solving problems. These individuals take particular pleasure in being able to solve difficult problems amicably. They apparently recognize that conflict is an unavoidable aspect of the job and see it as a challenge to their diplomacy and creativity to be able to resolve conflicts in the best way possible. In contrast, a similar number of supervisory officers report that although they enjoy working through internal procedures and processes, they prefer quiet progress without crisis and conflict. These officers did not see conflict as an opportunity to exercise skill, but rather as an impediment to the smooth running of the system. This preference for smooth, uneventful operation seems to relate very closely to another satisfier, that of the long-term evolution of the system. Some individuals find pleasure in being able to plan

Table 8-1: Board Supervisory Officers: The Most Satisfying Aspects of the Job

Satisfier	Sample quotations
Success of Own Initiatives and Pet Projects	"Being able to improve the learning environment - seeing something I initiated working well in the school." "Seeing a plan of mine actually work out successfully."
Power and Influence; Personal Recognition; Being in a Position to See the Larger Picture and Choose the Future Leaders	"Having an impact on the system; being able to convince people to make things better. "Having the power to do major things and make major changes."
Relationships with Colleagues - Other Supervisory Officers, Teachers, Principals, Trustees.	"I associate with people I regard highly." "I enjoy relating to people."
Problem Solving Generally; Solving Difficult Problems; Finding Ways to Deal Smoothly with Difficult Problems	"Finding creative solutions to thorny problems." "When I get parties to a conflict to a resolution and they are happy about the resolution."
Seeing the System Evolve to Provide Better Programs and Services to Students - Seeing Changes Happen Smoothly.	"Opportunity to step outside the job and look at what you are doing; to plan for the future." "Seeing a positive impact on the school in the learning for kids. Seeing it really happen at the school level."
Visiting Schools	"Being invited to a school and being received positively." "Visiting classrooms, seeing children, is very exciting."
Seeing Things Run Smoothly and Efficiently Throughout the System	"Seeing that things get done, and they seem to get done to the satisfaction of most people concerned." "I like it when things are quiet. Crises take away energy from progressive things."
Balancing the Budget and Keeping the System Solvent.	"Completing the year with no deficit. This was particularly rewarding because we had been under a lot of pressure in money matters." "Coming out with a reasonable budget under the circumstances, to satisfy both the academic supervisory officers and the ratepayers."
Getting Something Through the Political Process Successfully.	"Dealing effectively with politicians and getting political solutions that make improvements. "I presented a report to the board ... it went through with no problems. That was satisfying because it was tough."

for long-term change and development and seeing changes work out at the school level to provide improved educational services.

About one in every ten supervisory officers reports being especially happy when visiting schools. Although these officers were not specific about why they find school visits satisfying, certain inferences can be drawn from their comments. "Being received positively" could be regarded as a school-level endorsement -- a confirmation that one's work is seen as benefitting rather than hindering the school. One might also suggest that there is a certain degree of gratification from personal recognition.

A smaller group of supervisory officers, approximately one in every twenty, report that they derive particular satisfaction from managing the system's financial resources effectively and responsibly. Not surprisingly, all of the supervisory officers who mention this satisfier are business officers; they comprise about half of the business officers interviewed. These officers mention being particularly satisfied when they are able to budget successfully such that their academic colleagues are able to provide the resources they want.

A few supervisory officers mention that they derive pleasure from being able to navigate successfully through the political process. They see the political structures as an unavoidable obstacle course and find it satisfying to be able to make good things happen in spite of political constraints. As the next section shows, this aspect of the job is not commonly seen to be a satisfying aspect of the job.

In summary, most supervisory officers seem to find job satisfaction from being in a position to make something happen and from being recognized as having done so. Clearly, the more ownership the supervisory officer feels for the project, initiative or idea, the more he/she will derive satisfaction from its completion or success. A few supervisory officers respond to the challenge of conflict, but an equal number would prefer to avoid it. With the exception of only one satisfier -- balancing the budget -- none of the satisfiers seems to correlate with any of the formal or informal characteristics of the supervisory officers themselves or the systems in which they work. Thus, although the general outline of job satisfaction is fairly constant, its specific expression seems to be largely idiosyncratic.

8.2. Dissatisfiers

Much more unanimity is evident in the responses to the question of what is dissatisfying about the job (see Table 8-2). More than half of the supervisory officers interviewed say that the most frustrating aspect of the job is having to work within the political structures imposed upon them. For many this is manifest particularly in the frustration they feel at the way the political process slows down everything that they do:

"You get so tired of having to go through political channels;"

"Getting decisions takes so long."

A great deal of effort can be expended on a project which never makes it through the political process, a situation that some supervisory officers feel sometimes leads to inappropriate decisions, or decisions made for the wrong reasons.

"We invest such a lot of time and effort, then nothing gets done. It had been presented in time to meet the budget, but was delayed until it was too late."

Many supervisory officers mention frustration in dealings with trustees. Some say that the political structure of the elected board leads to an adversarial approach which interferes with the running of the

Table 8-2: Board Supervisory Officers: The Most Dissatisfying Aspects of the Job

Dissatisfier	Sample quotations
THE POLITICAL PROCESS	
i) Influence on operations	"There is such heavy political influence exercised on educational decisions and compromises have to be made in order to have something happen."
	"The political process slows everything down and sometimes denies the best educational decision."
ii) Relationships with trustees	"It's really difficult ... in positions where one cannot say anything in rebuttal."
	"Trustees, because of elections, can change the face of a system overnight, out of all proportion to their value - they can destroy our good work."
iii) Negotiations	"[the negotiation process] is becoming dominated by unionists and not professional teachers."
WORKLOAD, TIME PRESSURE	"I spend too much on process and not doing the job."
	"It's the feeling of being trapped in the system, and wishing there were other links to see the outside world."
ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE BOARD	"It is very dissatisfying to be told in public by a trustee of a policy that you didn't know about."
RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER SUPERVISORY OFFICERS	"To avoid offending someone, you have to anticipate how your actions will be perceived and inform everyone who might be offended before it happens."
DISTANCE FROM SCHOOLS	"I'm always a visitor - I don't belong in the school."
	"I am not able to do anything directly myself... arms' length leadership is very difficult."

system. Some feel that there is confusion about what role trustees should play and what role supervisory officers should play. They resent being obliged to respond to "... unreasonable demands" to perform "... pointless tasks" from an "... uncoordinated group" of "... unpredictable" trustees who "... interfere in administrative matters" and "... take action without sufficient information" because "... they don't understand our work." A few supervisory officers express great unhappiness over situations where trustees "... are often derogatory towards us" or "... make personal attacks on us in public."

The third most commonly mentioned frustrating aspect of political procedure is negotiation with teachers' groups. Some supervisory officers see the "... confrontational approach" which has developed over recent years as "... wasteful and irrational." Several express dissatisfaction over the way in which collective agreements frequently impede them from making the decisions they would like to make on staffing matters.

About two out of every ten supervisory officers say that workload is a dissatisfying aspect of the job. This is most commonly expressed as a dissatisfaction with having to spend inordinate amounts of time on inappropriate types of tasks. Some supervisory officers feel that they waste too much time performing tasks which could easily be performed by less qualified people, thus freeing them to concentrate on what they consider to be their real work.

Slightly less than one in every ten supervisory officers complains that some particular aspect of the administrative structure of the system is frustrating. Some complain that subordinates "... delegate upwards to avoid responsibility" others that superordinates don't allow them enough autonomy, although these two opposing complaints did not appear in the same systems. A few supervisory officers say that they do not like the decision-making mode used in the system, and a few others say that they feel there is no forum for consensus. In most cases these complaints are made by a single individual in a system, and since they do not correlate with any formal or informal board characteristics, it could be concluded that these are isolated individuals who are not well matched with the administrative structure in which they work. This could simply be the kind of random dissatisfaction which cannot be avoided in any organization. However, the next most common grouping of dissatisfiers, relationships with other supervisory officers, could well be seen as cumulative. The proportion expressing dissatisfaction is thus closer to two in every ten supervisory officers, and more worthy of note. Complaints tend to be centred on the problems of "... territoriality", communications, and the balance between autonomy and consensus. In only one or two cases do these complaints appear to result from personal incompatibility. If in all other cases the complaints relate to the organizational structure within which these officers must interact, consideration should be given to altering the structure.

A few supervisory officers say that they find their distance from schools frustrating. The frustration seems to arise mostly from the difficulty of making things happen from "... arms' length." For some supervisory officers, this experience must contrast sharply with their experience of direct leadership as principals. A few officers express this same frustration as dissatisfaction with what they perceive as lack of cooperation on the part of teachers and principals.

Dissatisfiers of supervisory officers fall into two main categories. First, a very large proportion of them find that the political structure of school systems, in particular the influence of trustees, hinders them from reaching what they perceive to be the goals of the system. Frustration seems to stem from their conviction that they, as professionals, know what should be done and they resent the potential for interference represented by the political processes imposed upon them. Many, however, are quick to point out that they would not like to see the system abolished, because the public input and accountability imposed by the current structure is far preferable to allowing a totally free hand to professionals. A clarification of the interaction between professional and political roles is essential, as would some preparation for coping with its inevitable problems.

The second major source of discontent is the way in which the professional component of the system is organized. Although a certain level of dissatisfaction is inevitable, perhaps there is more here than should be readily dismissed.

8.3. Rewards

Supervisory officers were asked to think globally about their jobs and to discuss in general terms what they perceive to be the rewards and costs of the job. Table 8-3 summarizes the responses given to the question about rewards.

Responses were quite varied, and do not seem to correlate, with the exception of two items, with any formal or informal characteristics of either the boards or the supervisory officers themselves. This seems to suggest that the rewards of the job are largely idiosyncratic. As Table 8-3 shows, the rewards stated are all intrinsic, with the exception of salary, and indeed those individuals who mentioned salary almost always mentioned an intrinsic reward as well.

Table 8-3: Board Supervisory Officers: Rewards of the Job

Relationships with colleagues
Salary
Making a contribution to something worthwhile
Having influence and the opportunity to have an impact on what happens
Flexibility and freedom in the job
Personal recognition from colleagues and the community

About two in every ten supervisory officers say that the most important reward of the job is the relationships they establish with others in their working lives. A similar proportion say that the salary they earn is a major reward. A disproportionately large number of business officers include themselves in this group, and this might suggest that their experience in the private sector gives them a different perspective on this matter. Only a very small number of supervisory officers say that the salary is not rewarding, and they expressed this not in absolute terms but in comparison with what they earned as principals.

One in every ten supervisory officers says that the most important reward of the job is in perceiving oneself to be a contributor in a worthwhile endeavour. A similar number express this idea differently, saying that they like being in a position to influence and direct the way education will evolve in their systems. Slightly fewer supervisory officers say that one of the major rewards of the job is prestige in the community and personal recognition. Some supervisory officers express this in terms of the reputation of the system in the community. Directors in small systems in particular seem to identify their own prestige with that of the system.

Thus, although salary is recognized by many as an important benefit of the position, supervisory officers more readily express the rewards of the job in intrinsic terms. In particular, they derive long-term satisfaction from their working relationships and from their personal perceptions of prestige and purpose.

8.4. Costs

As with satisfiers and dissatisfiers, there is a good deal more unanimity about costs than rewards. The majority of respondents declare that the greatest cost of the job is the effect of the overwhelming workload and time commitment on their personal lives. Incumbents blamed the excessive workload and time commitment for three types of personal cost. First, one-third of respondents said that the time demands in particular cause serious family stress. Interviewers heard many stories of marriages which did not survive the constant absences, of children seemingly brought up by a spouse. Many respondents expressed their appreciation of a supportive spouse, and many more said that it would have been impossible to do the job when their children were young. Second, many interviewees said that the time demands of their jobs made it impossible for them to take part in community activities, hobbies, recreational activities and the like, such that they felt that they became less well-rounded and well-balanced people. Finally, many interviewees said that the demands of the job were a danger to their health, mental and/or physical.

Fatigue and stress were mentioned as particular problems. This widely-held perception that the job is extremely demanding in terms of time commitment might be open to question. Because of their background, supervisory officers probably compare their workload with that of teachers and principals rather than with a more appropriate referent group of managers and executives in the private sector.

Table 8-4: Board Supervisory Officers: Costs of the Job

Family stress
Giving up community and recreational activities for lack of time
Changes to health, both mental and physical
Distance from the school and pupils

The only other cost mentioned by some supervisory officers is being removed from the school. This cost was expressed in much the same way as it was as a dissatisfier -- the feeling of loss of direct impact and immediate reinforcement.

8.5. Stress

Interviewees completed a questionnaire containing fifty statements. The questionnaire has been widely used and tested for reliability (Goodstein and Pfeiffer, 1983) For each statement, respondents are asked to circle a number between one and five which best expresses the degree to which that statement is true for them, with five representing the highest level of agreement. These fifty statements can be grouped into ten subscales of stress such that for each respondent ten subscale scores can be calculated in addition to the total score. Thus, the lowest possible score on the stress instrument would be a score of 5 on each subscale and 50 in total, and the highest possible would be a score of 25 on each subscale and 250 in total. All of these scores were computer-analysed to ascertain the stress profile of supervisory officers and the impact on it of other variables which can be identified. Table 8-5 shows the ten subscales rank-ordered according to the responses.

As the table shows, the highest scores were recorded on the items which relate to inter-role distance, and the second highest were recorded on the role overload scale. This is quite consistent with the responses discussed earlier in this chapter.

8.5.1. Total stress scores

When total scores were compared by role, one statistically significant difference was found. Business officers and assistant directors tend to record lower levels of overall stress than do other supervisory officers.

Further comparisons by role, broken down by board size, revealed certain statistically significant differences. In large boards in particular, directors record high overall stress, but assistant supervisory officers score much lower.

Table 8-5: Board Supervisory Officers: Rank-Ordered Stress Subscale Scores

	Mean	SD
Inter-role distance	13.3	4.6
Role overload	11.2	3.9
Resources	10.5	3.8
Role isolation	9.7	3.6
Role expectation	9.5	3.0
Role stagnation	8.8	3.5
Self role conflict	8.5	2.8
Role erosion	8.4	3.2
Role ambiguity	8.2	3.2
Personal inadequacy	8.0	2.6

It is not surprising to find that supervisory officers who record high overall stress are likely to be substantially the same group who report feeling constrained in their work. The question asked in the interview was a general one, and responses were coded roughly into categories of "feeling generally free" and "feeling generally constrained". This correlation with overall stress seems to lend validity to the interview question.

8.5.2. Subscale scores - Inter-role distance

The statements composing this subscale include statements about how the job interferes with family life, community activities, and other non-work activities. Since such interference was overwhelmingly identified as the major cost of the job, it is not surprising that it is also the highest stress factor recorded. Analysis shows that, again not surprisingly, supervisory officers who report more evenings spent on the job also record higher stress on this subscale. As a general rule, directors seem to record higher levels of stress on this subscale and area and assistant superintendents tend to record slightly lower levels.

8.5.3. Subscale scores - Role overload

Statements included in this subscale refer to a generally unreasonable workload, which forces a reduction in quality. That this subscale ranks second is again a reinforcement of the responses recorded above in relation to job dissatisfaction.

Analysis shows that role overload seems to be higher in some boards and lower in others. This variation may be accounted for by certain board characteristics: boards with a hierarchical administrative structure in which supervisory officers have both area and functional responsibilities (the Tiered B structure) tend to record higher role overload, and boards with a hierarchical structure in which some superintendents have purely functional and some purely area responsibilities (Tiered A) tend to record slightly lower role overload. Since these two types of structure are found only in large boards, it is possible that board size itself is the major contributing factor. In particular, large boards with both urban and rural components seem to record higher role overload stress. This suggests that role overload will increase when a system expects superintendents to perform too great a variety of tasks.

8.5.4. Subscale scores - Resources

This subscale includes statements about inadequate access to information and resources, including human and financial resources. Supervisory officers in expanding boards tend to feel more stress related to the availability of resources. These boards are all Roman Catholic boards which are expanding as a result of recent legislation, and this stretching of resources is probably inevitable at the present time. Again, certain board characteristics seem to affect this subscale. Supervisory officers in boards with a Tiered B structure (where there is a hierarchical structure and superintendents have both area and functional responsibilities) tend to report more stress related to availability of resources, and supervisory officers in boards with a flat structure (combination) tend to report lower stress related to availability of resources. This seems to suggest that hierarchical levels impede the allocation of resources, although again it must be remembered that the highly hierarchical boards are all large, and thus it is impossible to ascertain which factor has most influence.

8.5.5. Subscale scores - Role isolation

This subscale includes items which relate to the lack of consultation and interaction between the supervisory officers working together in a system. The statements reflect sentiments similar to the dissatisfaction expressed with the way professionals work together in the organizational structure. Supervisory officers in boards which have a flat structure are less likely to record high role isolation stress, and scores are likely to be higher in large boards than in medium and small boards. As board size and organizational complexity increase, communication between supervisory officers appears to become more difficult.

8.5.6. Subscale scores - Role expectation conflict

This subscale contains five statements which refer to problems with conflicting expectations of subordinates, superordinates, and colleagues. Some of the statements, in the context of school systems, could be seen to refer to the conflict between the expectations of trustees, directors, parents, and schools. Interviewees were asked to talk about the various expectations held for them by different parties, and were asked to summarize whether on balance it was reasonable to have to try to meet all of these various expectations. Those supervisory officers who report that the demands made on them are irreconcilable record high role expectation stress, and thus the two questions offer validation for each. As a general rule, directors seem to record slightly higher role expectation conflict, probably attributable to their pivotal position between the political and professional sides of the organization. Area superintendents tend also to record higher role expectation conflict, probably a result of their pivotal position between the central office and the school levels of the system. In general, central officers, particularly business officers, record relatively lower levels of role expectation conflict.

8.5.7. Subscale scores - Role stagnation

This subscale contains items which relate feelings of stagnation, lack of opportunity to grow and progress in the system. This subscale ranked sixth, and did not correlate at all with any board or individual characteristics.

8.5.8. Subscale scores - Self role conflict

Five statements in the instrument talk about the ways in which the role might be in conflict with personal values, or might require the incumbent to behave in ways which he/she does not see as appropriate or most efficient. This subscale ranked relatively low on the stress scores, and correlated only with the question relating to general feelings of being constrained. Predictably, supervisory officers who do not feel constrained in their work generally experience less self role conflict.

8.5.9. Subscale scores - Role erosion

The statements in this subscale deal with feelings of having had responsibilities taken away or of not being given enough autonomy in the job. As a general rule only area and assistant superintendents tend to record high levels of role erosion, and usually only in large urban boards. This could be seen to be an aspect of role isolation, as discussed above.

8.5.10. Subscale scores - Role ambiguity

Statements in this subscale refer to confusions regarding role expectations, and uncertainties about the scope of one's responsibilities. Those officers who feel that the demands made on them are unrealistic and those who feel constrained in their work also record higher levels of role ambiguity, and it could be argued that these are in some ways measures of the same thing. Supervisory officers in boards with a flat structure tend to record lower levels of role ambiguity stress; this response may suggest that complex hierarchies and increased board size complicate the question of role definition.

8.5.11. Subscale scores - Personal inadequacy

The lowest ranked subscale contains statements which relate to feelings of personal inadequacy -- not being well enough trained or prepared or capable of the role. This does not appear to be a type of stress which supervisory officers experience much. One might also speculate that it is the one that individuals would less likely recognize and/or admit publicly.

8.6. Implications

The majority of supervisory officers say that the rewards of the job outweigh the costs, or at least balance them. However, their perceptions of the problems which beset the position are useful in providing insight into what aspects of the job they clearly do not feel comfortable with, and perhaps suggesting some of the reasons that other candidates may choose to avoid the job. Those perceptions are described below:

- Supervisory officers seem to derive most satisfaction from feeling useful, influential, and acknowledged. The biggest threat to these feelings seems to come from the potentially damaging uncertainties surrounding the role of the local politician in education.
- The next greatest threat seems to come from the way in which the organization of professional roles within a board may be perceived as inadequate by the supervisory officers. This may relate again to the need to feel some ownership of the way in which the organization is structured.
- There appears to be a major concern that the supervisory officer position is too demanding, leaving little opportunity for the incumbent to pursue a normal, well-rounded existence. In particular, an increased number of evening meetings leads to increased family and personal stress.

- The role of director is more stressful than other roles, especially with regard to the impact it has on personal life. Stress resulting from conflicting expectations is also greater.
- The role of business officer is relatively less stressful than others.
- Directors and area superintendents seem to occupy the two pivotal positions in boards, in that directors are intermediaries between school system and board, and area superintendents play a similar role between administration and schools. This role leads to an increased incidence of stress, particularly stress related to conflicting expectations.
- Role overload is increased where supervisory officers are asked to perform both area and system-wide duties.
- Very large boards seem to have certain stress profiles which may be related purely to size, or to their organizational structure, or to a combination of both. Their supervisory officers have more problems with role isolation, role ambiguity and access to resources. Excessive size and complicated hierarchy could be seen to be dysfunctional, since both factors seem to lead to increased stress and dissatisfaction.

We would like to conclude with a few interpretive comments. While most supervisory officers report that rewards outweigh the costs, the interviews do not convey a high degree of enthusiasm for the job. Reference was made on numerous occasions to the fact that many good people (e.g., principals) in the system were not seeking supervisory officer positions because they perceived the job as having too many drawbacks. Interviewees referred to its negative impact on life style and quality of life, to constant bombardment of policy changes, to pressures from the environment, and to limited scope for making a significant impact on the system. Many of the satisfiers were related to personal needs, and system operation rather than to significant components in the quality of the organization and the system.

Chapter 9
What Skills are Necessary for Supervisory Officers?

In education as elsewhere, identifying and understanding the characteristics of effective leaders is a perennial problem. Several studies have examined the leadership skills of supervisory officers (see Chapter 3 for a brief review). In Ontario, the study most directly comparable to the present one was conducted by Partlow *et al.*, 1980. This chapter builds on the Partlow work and other research studies: Section 1 provides a brief review of the Partlow findings, Section 2 reports on our own findings by describing the main skill clusters as seen by our respondents, and Section 3 analyses the meaning and implications of our results and relates the present study to recent literature on leadership in organizations.

9.1. Introduction

Partlow and his colleagues divided the characteristics of supervisory officers into two categories: "qualities" and "competencies". Through a consideration of open-ended and rank-ordered questions and observations of meetings, Partlow *et al.* generated a list of qualities and competencies seen "to be required or desirable for Supervisory Officers in Ontario". An overview of their findings provides a useful context for our study. Partlow *et al.* concluded that the following nine qualities, listed here in order of importance, were those considered most desirable:

1. integrity, honesty
2. positive human relations attitudes (empathy, understanding, sensitivity and enjoyment in working with people)
3. common sense
4. patience
5. dedication
6. sense of humour
7. natural leadership
8. diplomacy
9. intelligence

The top ten competencies, as rated by the Partlow study, were the following:

1. communication
2. human relations
3. decision-making
4. organization
5. leadership

6. evaluation
7. conceptual skills
8. managerial/administrative skills
9. professional development
10. political

9.2. Main skill clusters

9.2.1. Definition and illustrations of each cluster

In our interviews we asked the following question: "Going beyond the last two months, and thinking of your responsibilities and contributions over the long term, what skills are vital for the performance of your job?"

In analysing responses, we decided not to make firm distinctions between "qualities" and "skills". It seemed more helpful to identify the main clusters or characteristics considered to be vital. Later in the chapter, however, we divide the characteristics into qualities and process skills. We also decided not to quantify the clusters in numerical form. All the clusters identified were stressed by very high proportions of the sample. As we shall contend later, there is no point in rank-ordering "vital skills". They are all essential. They form a whole. Table 9-1 lists the ten clusters which consistently stood out in the interviews. Our goal in this section is to elaborate the meaning of these clusters using paraphrased quotes from the interviews. We also take up the question of what differences there might be across roles and types of boards (although it is the consistency across situations that is most remarkable).

We call these skill "clusters" because each contains a combination of characteristics. Although the dividing line between clusters is not always clear, we have tried to sort out the responses so that the content of each cluster has some consistency.

1. Communications (oral, written, listening)

We define the communications cluster as incorporating the multiple skills of giving and receiving communications concisely, accurately, and effectively, using a variety of media.

There appear to be three discrete skills involved: oral communication, ability to write, and skill in listening. The quotes reported below contain references to all three skills.

"You need to be able to listen, listen, listen. What are they really expressing in terms of needs?"

"Be a highly effective listener. Set up procedures so people are listened to and involved in building consensus about any issue."

"Quick on your feet. Think and respond quickly and clearly. Speak and write quickly."

"Communications -- constant need to be clear as people are easily confused."

"Visiting, communicating, listening/seeking, getting a grasp of the needs expressed, answering clearly and directly."

"Visibility. Need to constantly get around and keep people informed and find out what they are thinking."

Table 9-1: Skills/Characteristics Clusters Considered to be Vital
(Alphabetical Order)

1. Communications
   - oral
   - written
   - listening
2. Human Relations
3. Integrity
4. Knowledge
5. Organization
6. Persistence/Stamina
7. Planning/Analysis/Judgement
8. Political Astuteness
9. Self-Confidence
10. Vision

"Take information, distill it quickly and present it in a way that is clear to political bodies that make decisions."

"Written skills -- good concise reports, meeting deadlines."

"Listening, confronting, conflict resolution. One of the skills we are weakest at is being able to hear what people are saying."

2. Human Relations

We define human relations skills as the capacity to understand, relate to, value, develop, and make the best use of the human resources internal and external to the organization. Developing and engaging people, supervision, selection, deselection, and conflict management are part and parcel of this cluster.

"Dealing with people, ability to perceive concerns of others and deal with them in a non-threatening way -- empathy."

"You need great process skills apart from knowledge. Everything a supervisory officer does is indirect so you have to work with and through people, coaching, drawing them out, getting them to do something."

"You need the evaluation skill to analyse growth and development in principals -- to be able to analyse and influence the direction people are taking."

"Conflict resolution, problem solving, mediating and listening. The ability to zero in on the problem and aid others to look at the problem objectively."

"Negotiate with others and see their strengths and help them develop them. This is the most important skill. Get people motivated and have a piece of the action, ownership and responsibility."

"You have to be able to judge the maturity level of the people you are working with, both judging their skills and their willingness to take on responsibility. You need skill in developing people. My job is to make principals better managers of people."

"Teaching adults. Much of what I do is facilitating growth. Vital for supervisory officers."

"Leadership skills in chairing committees, communication, conflict resolution, ability to motivate, ability to listen."

"Tolerance -- working with people who do not have an educational vision; knowing how to deal with people."

"How to motivate people to be on committees or to join projects. People are prioritizing so you have to make it attractive and worthwhile."

"You have to understand people; be flexible and not jump the gun too fast. My job depends so much on the good will of people, coaxing them into what they should be doing."

"Negotiation, conflict resolution, see things from other points of view, go beyond positions people are taking at a given time."

3. Integrity

Integrity consists of standing for something important in a forthright, consistent, honest, reliable manner.

"Personal integrity is vital to withstand the de-motivators."

"Being fair, consistent, honest, up front, reliable."

"You have to maintain integrity in the face of opposition. We need to recommend what is best for the system."

"You've got to be able to convince people that you know what you are talking about. Credibility is very important. You have to build up your credibility level so that what you say is true and represents both sides of the argument and is up front and honest. You have to get that reputation."

"Honest and credible as a person. Unfortunately, it is a sad commentary that you can survive without being honest. It is sad, but you can really survive with duplicity."

"Give people straight answers. Don't promise anything you can't deliver."

"Sound judgement is critical, to know when to fight and to be able to defend what you are doing."

"You have to acknowledge when people are right and you are wrong."

4. Knowledge

Knowledge involves keeping up to date on the major developments, policies, programs and trends relevant to one's position and its place in the organization.

"Knowledge base. Have to be able to research a problem and find out issues."

"Ability to handle a lot of material, to stay ahead in several fields."

"Knowledge about what is coming next in the educational world, being pro-active, keeping up to date with trends."

"You need a strong base of knowledge or you have no credibility. You must know what is on the cutting edge."

"Need to have a lot of information at your fingertips in order to control a situation from getting needlessly out of hand. For example, having facts and figures and dates about enrolment when a question comes up so that people don't go off on tangents."

"Knowledge about programs and instructional strategies -- be current."

"Knowledge base, ability to sort out information and keep informed as well as informing others."

"Knowledge in the educational field -- promotes credibility with peers, principals, and staff."

"The skill of being able to keep up with what's happening in your field, and to be able to share it in a way that makes sense."

"Capacity to be a consumer of research."

5. Organization

This cluster refers to the organizational and action skills essential for getting valued things done amid multiple priorities and interruptions. It is the next step after planning and analysis.

"Organized but flexible -- be aware of when to delegate, not overly detailed. Recognize when details are important."

"Can't be a procrastinator. You have to be able to make a decision and act on it."

"Organizational skills -- facilitating work of others through scheduling time and resources."

"Juggle a variety of things and keep momentum."

"Time management essential -- must be well organized. Need to follow through. You need organization and the ability to compartmentalize so that you follow through."

"You need to know how to set up and work with committees on complex matters."

"I am now responsible for the development and adherence to policies when I just spent four years trying to avoid and circumvent policy."

"Organizational skills in setting priorities, being realistic and establishing time lines to meet them."

6. Persistence/Stamina

Persistence/Stamina consists of the set of mental and physical characteristics enabling one to persevere against considerable odds. It is the ability to stick to a task and follow it through to completion.

"You have to have the constitution of a horse."

"High personal drive and energy, not for the timid. Must be healthy and fit."

"Stamina of an ox, hide of a rhinoceros, extreme good health."

"Persistence to push ideas through, changing tack if necessary."

"You need to continually work on the problems, and you need infinite patience."

"Stamina -- you have to build and rebuild."

7. Planning/Analysis

The Planning/Analysis cluster is defined as the conceptual and intellectual capacity to zero in on the essence of a complex problem, to assemble pertinent information, and to synthesize data into clear, insightful, meaningful patterns, directions and/or recommendations. It includes intelligence and good judgement.

"You need to be a planner, to have a lot of awareness of how what you are doing will develop and how it will have an impact on others and how things fit together in that kind of coordinated framework within a system."

"You have to synthesize a tremendous amount of material into something meaningful."

"Must be more than a surface thinker -- good critical thinking based on wide knowledge."

"Strategic planning skills, anticipate the consequences, see where things will lead, where you want them to go, and the financial and human resource planning that goes along with it."

"There is a dual role -- planning change for the system on the one hand, helping individuals reach their potential on the other hand."

"Quick grasp of issues -- seeing through the trees. Being able to see overall picture of a complicated issue."

"Recognize problems before they become problems and make good decisions. Prevention is the key."

"Use of planning frameworks -- implementation plans, evaluation plans, etc. Ability to move back and forth from the abstract to specifics."

"Forecasting, predicting and putting in the steps to get to the goal "

"Analytical -- to be able to see the parameters of a problem, to get to the root and see the real issue."

"Creativity -- finding a better and more efficient way of doing things, problem solving, being systematic not just patching it through. Come up with a unique approach that will work in a given situation, not always using a traditional approach."

"The ability to analyse lots of information and see options for action."

"You go through a lot of information, analyse, see patterns, synthesize, integrate, and make a decision sometimes quickly."

8. Political Astuteness

Political astuteness is the ability to identify, understand, respond to, influence and ultimately obtain the support of local and provincial political forces.

"Political realities. You need to be able to assess your own changes of getting things through; anticipate various responses that people will have. You need to be able to know the timing to head off objections. You need to predict and prepare for any eventuality. Without this it doesn't matter how terrific your initiatives are or how good your reports are. They will go nowhere."

"Good political sense -- working with trustees, how to use the press, know the power structure."

"Political skills -- to be able to say no to a politician but make them feel at ease."

"Attuned to the political structure of the board, the forces out there that direct the politics, trustees, etc."

"You have to have political skills such as tact, diplomacy, watching that you don't get hung out to dry."

"Political skills to gain support."

"Political skills. Many of us haven't taken this seriously enough. Where have we gone wrong in not getting more support from trustees? We need better lobbying and political presentation skills. We need to tap into trustee needs, and to lead the board, and we aren't doing that."

9. Self-Confidence

Self-confidence involves believing in what you are doing and responding to opposition without becoming defensive.

"Solid self-concept is vital -- must be solid because of the slings and arrows that get thrown at you in the political arena."

"Self-confidence -- repertoire of expertise. You develop an awareness of the system, of the nuances of education, of the concerns that people have, of the value systems of parents, etc."

"Thick-skinned, not to take things personally. Trustees say things all the time and you can't take them personally. If you do you could be dead in the water."

"Good sense of self-control. You have to be able to lose occasionally without taking it personally."

"Self control or thick-skinned, ready to take a lot of flak."

"Be prepared to take calculated risks -- confidence and trust in yourself and others who work with you."

"You have to believe in what you are doing and not collapse if someone disagrees."

10. Vision

Vision is the capacity to see the big picture, to articulate a clear philosophy, and to envision an organizational future that promises to be significantly better than the present. Encouraging risk-taking is part of vision.

"You have to have a clear vision of what you work to achieve and a long-term view of where the system will be going."

"Conceptualizing the big picture, perspective, dreams, understanding context and politics. Ability to stand back and look at the total."

"Knowledge -- ability to stay ahead and current -- read a lot, solid academic base and develop your own model or vision."

"Understanding conceptually what is going on around us, the political forces, changes in society."

"Insight -- ability to project an idea into the future."

"Emphasize the future, willingness to take risks and encourage others to take risks and not dump on them if it doesn't work."

"You need to have a broad perspective concerning what is going on in other boards, and to look at things outside of education which might have an impact on education."

"You need a philosophy of education and a value system to know where you are going."

"Vision -- goal setting, step back from things and reflect, going beyond the present."

"A well-conceived philosophy to back up the role -- must withstand pressure."

"Be able to know how your job fits into the overall scheme of things. Understand the system as a whole. Where it is going.."

"Being a good thinker, having vision. This is the most critical, need to develop a vision and then go for it."

"It's not enough to look at your own position and be narrow-minded -- so many other programs impact on what you are doing. Know what is happening in the board."

9.2.2. Differences across roles and boards

Although differences related to both situation and personality doubtless exist in the application of skill clusters, the main clusters and even the use of language were remarkably similar across the interviews. Most differences were matters of degree and emphasis (e.g., working with larger groups) than matters of kind.

There were two types of obvious differences. First, directors placed more emphasis on vision and political astuteness. Second, as would be expected, business officials emphasized technical and financial knowledge and skills -- what would be considered the content specification of the "knowledge cluster". By and large, however, all the interviews were dominated by an emphasis on the ten clusters described. We do not wish to ignore differences in types of roles: area superintendents do need certain skills to be more influential with central office; geographically dispersed boards do face special problems of communication; heterogenous communities do present especially difficult situations in formulating a vision. In our view, these examples are variations in the application of the basic leadership qualities and skills. Ultimately, it is the variety of experience and application of skills in different situations that seems most important to us.

9.2.3. Relationships among the clusters

There are two main issues we would like to address in this subsection, the relationship among the ten clusters, and the omission of any obvious skills. As a starting point for reviewing the relationship among clusters, the ten clusters can be depicted in two broad categories, as follows:

1. **Process Skills:**

   Human Relations

   Communication

   Planning/Analysis

   Organization

   Political Skills

2. **Qualities:**

   Self Confidence

   Stamina

   Knowledge

   Integrity

   Vision

Self-confidence, stamina, knowledge, integrity, and vision can be seen more as qualities than skills, although they have their skill components. In any case these five qualities form the base of leadership. The five skill clusters -- political, human relations, communication, planning, and organization -- tend to be processes which taken as a set represent the means through which leadership is informed and carried out.

Overlaps or connections occur across clusters. Knowledge and vision overlap, and self-confidence probably influences some (but not all) aspects of stamina. Among the process skills, planning/analysis (preparing for) and organization (doing) are closely interrelated. Communication and human relationship skills also overlap (e.g., listening skills), and are fundamentally related to all other clusters. There is no use having a vision if you cannot communicate it. Planning and analysis is next to useless if it is not informed by and does not engage the human resources of the organization. Organization is nothing if it is not permeated by good communication and human relations. In short, the clusters must be viewed in concert.

The second question we raised was whether there were any skills/qualities not mentioned or insufficiently stressed in our interviews. In particular, our interviews contained references to flexibility, ability to deal with complexity/ambiguity, sense of humour, evaluation skills, and risk-taking.

Flexibility, complexity, and ambiguity are part of planning and organization. These two task-related skills, judging from the interviews, amount to the ability to handle large amounts of complex information, to plan accordingly, and be able to incorporate new ideas and directions (i.e., adapt) as the planning and management process unfolds.

Having a sense of humour was mentioned by a large number of our interviewees. We have no quarrel about adding it to the qualities, but have not done so because it seems less central as a distinct quality. (Perhaps it is part of human relations effectiveness.)

Evaluation skills are certainly central to being an effective leader. Personnel evaluation is explicitly incorporated into our human relations cluster since human resource development, performance

appraisal and the like are basic to it. Program evaluation skills are not explicitly referred to in our list but are part of the planning and organization sequence.

Finally, risk-taking, as we have implied, is contained in the notion of vision. Encouraging and facilitating new images of the future and the means to implement them fosters an atmosphere of imagination and innovation.

9.3. Implications

9.3.1. Relationship to recent literature on leadership

There are several advantages to relating our findings to the recent literature on leadership in organizations. First, over the past five years, this literature has experienced a creative boom which has produced many good books since Peters and Waterman's watershed stimulus (1982). Second, it provides an opportunity to see how our list compares with findings on leadership outside educational settings. Third, our list is ad hoc and static. It would benefit from reformulation based on a more explicit theoretical framework which highlights the dynamic nature of the clusters and their relationships in action. We are interested in producing the smallest number of meaningful basic skills/qualities of supervisory officers as leaders rather than an elaborate list of skills and competencies.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) conducted in-depth interviews with 90 top leaders in a range of public and private organizations in order to identify the skills and strategies used by known effective leaders. Their final list of four basic strategies or skill sets is congruent with our findings:

- Attention Through Vision
- Meaning Through Communication
- Trust Through Positioning
- The Deployment of Self

In general terms, Bennis and Nanus state that "The new leader ... is one who commits people to action, who converts followers into leaders, and who may convert leaders into agents of change" (1985:3). Because of its centrality to our study we will provide considerable elaboration of the four strategies, quoting and paraphrasing Bennis and Nanus.

Attention through vision

"Management of attention through vision is the creating of focus" (p.28) ... "What we discovered is that leaders also *pay attention* as well as catch it ... the new leadership under discussion is not arbitrary or unilateral but rather an impressive and subtle sweeping back and forth of energy..."(p.32, emphasis in original).

Further: "In all these cases, the leaders may have been the one who chose the image from those available at the moment, articulated it, gave it form and legitimacy, and focused attention on it, but the leader only rarely was the one who conceived it in the first place". And, "therefore, the leader must be a superb listener" and successful leaders are *great askers*, and they do pay attention (p.96, emphasis in original).

> "All of the leaders to whom we spoke seemed to have been masters at selecting, synthesizing, and articulating an appropriate vision of the future ... If there is a spark of genius in the leadership function at all, it must lie in this transcending ability, a kind of magic, to assemble --

out of all the variety of images, signals, forecasts and alternatives -- a clearly articulated vision of the future that is at once single, easily understood, clearly desirable, and energizing" (p. 101).

This dynamic view of vision incorporates, our characteristics of **analysis, listening skills, knowledge,** and **vision.**

Meaning through communication

An essential factor in leadership, according to the findings of Bennis and Nanus, is "the capacity to influence and organize meaning for the members of the organization" (p.39) ... "Getting the message across unequivocally at every level is an absolute key" (p.143). Leadership through communication is the creation of understanding, participation, and ownership of the vision (p.112). Bennis and Nanus make it clear that developing commitment to new visions requires constant communications and a variety of other methods including training, recruitment criteria, new policies, etc.

Meaning through communication obviously links to the **communication** cluster and some aspects of **human relations** and **political astuteness**.

Trust through positioning

"We trust people who are predictable, whose positions are known and who keep at it, leaders who are trusted make themselves known, make their positions clear" (p.44). Bennis and Nanus state that there are two critical reasons for stressing trust through positioning. The first relates to "organizational integrity" -- having a clear sense of what it stands for. The second is related to constancy, "staying the course". Positioning involves "creating a niche in a complex changing environment" through persistence, integrity, and trust.

Returning to our list, **integrity, organization**, and **persistence** are most clearly related to positioning.

Deployment of self

The deployment of self through positive self-regard consists of three components, according to Bennis and Nanus: "knowledge of one's strengths, the capacity to nurture and develop those strengths, and the ability to discern the fit between one's strengths and weaknesses and the organization's needs" (p.61). They also observe that such leaders induce positive "other-regard". Effective leaders use five key skills: (1) the ability to accept people as they are; (2) the capacity to approach relationships and problems in terms of the present rather than the past; (3) the ability to treat those who are close to us with the same courteous attention as that extended to strangers and casual acquaintances (they cite two particular problems of over-familiarity -- not hearing what is said, and failing to provide feedback indicating attentiveness); (4) the ability to trust others even if the risk is great; and (5) the ability to do without constant approval and recognition from others (pp.66-67).

All the leaders in the Bennis and Nanus study were perpetual learners. They had learned how to learn in an organizational context (p.189). They constantly learned on the job and enabled and stimulated others to learn.

Relative to our findings, deployment of self entails the qualities of **self-confidence, human relations,** and **communication.**

Finally, Bennis and Nanus raise the question of "leadership for what". In this view it is *empowerment* of organizational members "to translate intention into reality and sustain it" (p.80). They

identify four components: *significance* (being in the centre of doing something valuable), *competence* (mustering and learning new skills), *community* (a sense of reliance on one another toward a common cause), and *enjoyment* (satisfaction and fun).

We have reported on this study at some length because Bennis and Nanus have explored leadership qualities in depth and described them with both subtlety and conciseness. Table 9-2 summarizes the relationship between our ten clusters and their four strategic orientations of effective leaders.

Table 9-2: The Relationship between Bennis/Nanus Qualities and Our Clusters

Bennis/Nanus	**Our Clusters**
Attention Through Vision	Analysis Listening Skills Knowledge Vision
Meaning Through Communication	Political Astuteness Communication Human Relations
Trust Through Positioning	Integrity Organization Persistence
The Deployment of Self	Self-Confidence Communication Human Relations

We need not dwell on other recent studies except to refer to their compatibility with Bennis and Nanus and our own findings. Harold Leavitt (1986) in *Corporate Pathfinders* boils the essence of effective leadership down to three major clusters: *pathfinding* (vision, integrity, persistence), *problem solving* (planning, analysis, human relationship), *implementing* (management, doing, communication). He talks about how particular traits have dominated certain periods (e.g., problem solving through management by objectives -- the 1960s). He stresses the need for all three capacities to be present in effective leaders. He laments that in the present there is a paucity of the pathfinding capacity.

In an interesting article on educational leadership, Duke (1986) talks about "the aesthetics of leadership". The main concepts are familiar: *direction* (it is a path, together with a reason for traveling it), *engagement* (developing meaning through involvement), *fit* (interaction lending to basic agreement on the values, goals, and culture of the organization), and *originality* (the capacity of the leader to capture members' and clients' imagination in ideas, behaviour, programs, etc.).

Paterson, Purkey, and Parker (1986) develop a framework for "Educational Leadership in a Nonrational World", consisting of vision building, strategic planning, realization. Along the way, they stress the critical importance of understanding (analysing) the environment, patience and persistence in strategic planning, and communication skills. They elevate "integrity" to the highest rank, and identify empowerment in the service of agreed-upon goals as the measure of leadership impact.

One last item worth noting. Theodore Sorenson, President Kennedy's former aide, made a strong impression with a speech on leadership to the Ontario Liberal Party think-tank in January, 1987.

Generalizing about the leadership qualities of effective heads of state, Sorenson observes that they all had a sense of history, a sense of humour, and a sense of self -- combined with the following essential qualities.

- all have been masters of persuasion, not power
- all have been equipped with vision, not merely vote-getting ability
- all relied on advisers, not merely admirers

9.3.2. Acquiring the skills/qualities

In any consideration of the initial implications of the findings, several features should be highlighted. These pertain to *consistency*, *imprecision*, *sophistication*, *coherence*, *application*, *acquisition*, and *impact*.

First, as we have emphasized, there is a remarkable consistency across the interviews in the sample. The same themes recur among the majority of interviews. Second, while the skills and qualities cited are in the same domains, there is a marked sense of vagueness and imprecision (related to the feature of sophistication). Interviewees talk readily of people skills, communication skills, planning and analysis capacity, political awareness and the like. On closer examination, most of those interviewed were unable to describe the skills in specific terms; in other interviews, people mean different subskills even though they are using identical labels. Thus, we cannot take the cluster headings for granted. Each needs to be defined in more precise terms.

Third, and most fundamental, is the realization that we are dealing with a sophisticated, subtle, and complex amalgam of qualities. Each cluster in its own right has subtle combinations. The clusters are not a list of discrete competencies, but combine to form a whole. They are a way of thinking about people and organizations as much as a way of working. Further, as research has also confirmed, they combine qualities and skills that do not easily go together -- simultaneous simplicity and complexity, tolerance of ambiguity and clarity of vision, planning and flexibility, empathy and high expectations, push and patience.

Fourth is the matter of coherence. We have said that the clusters form a whole, but we have not gone far enough in determining whether they form an interrelated, coherent theoretical framework. In their present form they do not, although we believe that they provide many of the main elements for such a framework.

Fifth, we are concerned with application in two senses. One is the reminder that despite the consistency, we realize people are demonstrating these qualities and skills in different situations -- big-city environments vs geographically dispersed rural areas, small, highly personalized situations vs large-scale impersonal settings, highly specialized tasks vs general responsibilities. The other is that application of skills needs to be related to what supervisory officers do (Chapter 6). When this is done, more specific planning and implementation models geared to specific portfolios can (and have been) formulated. Leithwood and Montgomery (1986) do this systematically for the principal. More recently, Leithwood (1987) links these models to school system policies and procedures for effective school administration. Fullan, Anderson, and Newton (1986) describe operational models for curriculum review, development and implementation. We contend that the leadership skills and qualities examined in this chapter are (or need to be) embedded in effective uses of more specific models. Performance appraisal and professional development, for example, have much to do with vision, human resource development and communication. Implementation, to take another example, requires planning, management and persistence.

Sixth, the question of the acquisition of effective qualities of leadership is at the heart of our study We take this issue up directly in Chapter 12. One major point can be made at this time. Given the sophistication and the complexity of the qualities, it is obvious to us that they must be developed over time in a combination of planned preservice and inservice learning experiences both on and off the job. Courses, workshops and the like are part of this, but so are purposeful work experiences in a *variety* of settings, whether internships, secondments or normal progression through administrative ranks. We say planned and purposeful to stress that these developments normally do not happen by chance. Such skills are developed by working in a variety of situations, applying knowledge and skills, deriving new knowledge and skills from experience, reflection and practice -- in short, integrating practice and theory in an ever-expanding way.

Impact is the last feature emphasized. It goes back to the "leadership for what" question. Transforming desired intentions into reality is the most general level. The ten clusters in this chapter can be seen as the qualities which, if present, result in more and more members of the organization working in concert to realize the variety of desired goals. The supervisory officers directly influence development of the human resources which surround them. This development in turn affects the short- and long-term educational goals of the system.

Chapter 10
Certification

This chapter examines the certification process in Ontario from a variety of perspectives. First, the historical perspective is presented, with material drawn primarily from Johnson's (1986) paper on the supervisory officer examination system. The current examination process is then described, using data from the ministry, the reports of our interview respondents, and observations where these were possible. Finally, on the basis of the same types of data we reach some conclusions about the success of the certification system. A reasonable judgement requires that two questions be addressed: how well the current system is operating, and even more important, how adequate the system is for the difficult and complex task of certifying supervisory officers in Ontario.

10.1. Historical background

Ontario is the only province in Canada that requires both a certificate as a licence to practise as a supervisory officer, and the passing of an examination to earn the certificate. The supervisory officer examinations have been a requirement for 115 years. Johnson (1986) notes the examination was first legislated in 1871 with the establishment of the county inspector position. The legislation of the day stated,

> "In each county ... there shall be one or more school officers, to be called county inspectors ... The qualifications of county, city or town inspectors shall be prescribed .. by the Council of Public Instruction which shall determine the time and manner of examination of candidates for Certificates of Qualifications and grant Certificates of Qualifications; and no one not holding such Certificate of Qualification shall be eligible to be appointed an inspector" (Johnson, 1986,p.2).

Originally, candidates for supervisory officer positions had to write 13 examinations. The number was reduced in 1919 to 6 examinations: school law, modern tendencies in education (first paper), modern tendencies in education (second paper), methods in mathematics, science, and geography, modern elementary educational systems, and methods in English and history. In 1947, the number of examinations was reduced to 4.

Until 1946, candidates were required to pass only written examinations. However, in that year an oral examination was added. As VanderBurgh (1967) states:

> "The basic purpose of the oral interview is to assess whether the candidate's personality and knowledge of education in general, are such that he may be certified as qualified to carry out the duties of a supervisory officer of elementary schools and to represent the Minister of Education" (p. 20).

McCordic (1984) argues that the certification of inspectors of secondary schools followed a different pattern of evolution. Because of their higher academic qualifications, Ryerson established a pattern under which individuals who were appointed to secondary school principalships became inspectors without

having to write the inspectors' examination. With the establishment of the county boards in 1969, the former secondary school inspectors became supervisory officers with responsibilities from kindergarten to grade 13. In 1971, the regulations were revised to require all supervisory officer candidates to write the certificate examination.

A third category of supervisory officers, school business officials, was included under the certification umbrella in 1975.

> "In 1975 it was recognized that senior business officials ... should have supervisory officers' qualifications ... to create parity between senior business officials and academic officials of a board ... and to ensure that business officials have some knowledge of the field of education (The Way Ahead, 1984, p. 33).

When this change was instituted, 305 business officials were deemed to be supervisory officers. Subsequently, all school board business officials followed the same certification route as academic supervisory officers, although business officials have two questions on the examination designed specifically for them. In 1987, however, of the 145 persons employed as business officials, only 16 had earned certification through the examination process.

In order to receive a supervisory officer certificate, candidates must pass both a written and an oral examination. At present, there is no limit to the number of times a candidate may try either examination. The pass mark is 60 per cent.

10.2. The examination: Clients

Each year, several hundred candidates apply for the examinations. Their eligibility is determined by Ministry of Education officials using criteria detailed in Regulation 276.

10.2.1. Eligibility

Currently, any individual who meets the legal requirements may try the examinations. Thus, there is virtually an open enrolment process. Regulation 276 outlines the requirements to qualify as a candidate for the supervisory officer examinations, and these were listed in Chapter 1 of this report (see pages 2 and 3).

10.2.2. The candidates

The ministry maintains statistics on a limited range of data concerning the candidates for supervisory officer examinations.

Generalizing about the leadership qualities of effective heads of state, Sorenson observes that they all had a sense of history, a sense of humour, and a sense of self -- combined with the following essential qualities:

- all have been masters of persuasion, not power
- all have been equipped with vision, not merely vote-getting ability
- all relied on advisers, not merely admirers

9.3.2. Acquiring the skills/qualities

In any consideration of the initial implications of the findings, several features should be highlighted. These pertain to *consistency*, *imprecision*, *sophistication*, *coherence*, *application*, *acquisition*, and *impact*.

First, as we have emphasized, there is a remarkable consistency across the interviews in the sample. The same themes recur among the majority of interviews. Second, while the skills and qualities cited are in the same domains, there is a marked sense of vagueness and imprecision (related to the feature of sophistication). Interviewees talk readily of people skills, communication skills, planning and analysis capacity, political awareness and the like. On closer examination, most of those interviewed were unable to describe the skills in specific terms; in other interviews, people mean different subskills even though they are using identical labels. Thus, we cannot take the cluster headings for granted. Each needs to be defined in more precise terms.

Third, and most fundamental, is the realization that we are dealing with a sophisticated, subtle, and complex amalgam of qualities. Each cluster in its own right has subtle combinations. The clusters are not a list of discrete competencies, but combine to form a whole. They are a way of thinking about people and organizations as much as a way of working. Further, as research has also confirmed, they combine qualities and skills that do not easily go together -- simultaneous simplicity and complexity, tolerance of ambiguity and clarity of vision, planning and flexibility, empathy and high expectations, push and patience.

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10.2.2. The candidates

The ministry maintains statistics on a limited range of data concerning the candidates for supervisory officer examinations.

Table 10-1: Percentage of Female Candidates for Written and Oral Examinations

	Written	Oral
1980	20	20
1981	20	26
1982	22	25
1983	27	32
1984	28	26
1985	32	29
1986	36	35
1987	33	37

As indicated in Table 10-1, the majority of those who write supervisory officer examinations are males, but the percentage of candidates who are female has increased steadily since 1980. For the written exam, the proportion of females has increased from 20 per cent in 1980 to 33 per cent in 1987, while for the oral, the percentage of females has increased from 20 per cent in 1980 to 37 per cent in 1987.[1]

Candidates trying the examination come from a variety of roles. A review of the 1986 statistics indicates that 34 per cent were principals, 24 per cent were vice-principals, 12 per cent were teachers and 20 per cent were not employed by school boards (these were primarily the Ministry of Education). The remaining candidates were drawn from the ranks of department heads, consultants and business officials. Among candidates identified as teachers or department heads, approximately half were women, while the majority of those who were vice-principals were men. Men outnumbered women three to one in the principal group. There were no women among business supervisory officer candidates. Nine per cent of those trying the examinations were francophone, compared with 3 per cent in 1980. Here there is some ambiguity in the ministry data. For summary report purposes, the Ministry of Education defines francophone candidates as those who tried their examinations in French. However, candidates have the choice of being examined in either English or French, and some who would be defined as francophone using the definition in Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms elect to try one or more components of their examination in English. The current definition used by the ministry to reflect francophone involvement may thus understate the number of francophone candidates.

10.2.3. Study material

All candidates accepted as eligible for the examination receive a large study kit, estimated to cost approximately $40.00 per kit. It includes copies of the relevant legislation, regulations, and curriculum documents sanctioned by the Ministry of Education. It also includes references to specific Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines, numbered memoranda, and policy-related materials available in schools. No specific references are cited concerning administration and organization literature. The only

[1] The researchers encountered difficulties dealing with statistical data provided by the ministry. Some of the statistics seem inconsistent, or at least difficult to interpret. For instance, one set of data released by the ministry entitled "Supervisory Officers' Certificate Examination: Candidates' Success Rates: 1973 to 1986" uses two different bases to calculate the percentage who pass the written examination. Again, for each year's group of candidates, the ministry figures include a statistic entitled "Percentage receiving a Certificate". On close examination, it becomes apparent that, for some years, the figure reported represents the percentage of all those who originally applied to write the examination, rather than the percentage of those who actually wrote it. Given the number of candidates who withdraw prior to the examinations (in 1986, 28 per cent), the relevance of such a statistic is questionable.

title mentioned which may be interpreted as advocating a particular conceptual view of curriculum implementation and change is that by Fullan and Park (1981). The list of study materials is given in Appendix F - List of Study Materials for the Supervisory Officer Examination.

10.3. The examinations: development and administration

10.3.1. The written examination

Regulation 276, Supervisory Officers, requires that the written examinations shall encompass:

a) acts and regulations affecting the operation of schools and school boards;

b) the curriculum guidelines, and related reference materials pertaining to elementary and secondary education in Ontario; and

c) theories and practices of supervision, administration, and business organization that may be applicable to the effective operation of a school system.

A review of written examinations for the past few years indicates that these matters are addressed in four questions. There is generally one question dealing with curriculum and/or curriculum implementation, with a separate curriculum question for business candidates. (They are asked to address curriculum issues from a business rather than an academic perspective). A second question requires the candidates to answer five parts out of eight using an essay format. This question focuses on supervision, administration, and organizational concerns from the perspective of a supervisory officer. A third question is a multiple-choice type based solely on school law. A final question, concerned with educational finance, has two parts, one for potential academic supervisory officers, another for potential school business officials.

Development of the written questions is coordinated by the office of the provincial coordinator for supervisory officer examinations in the Ministry of Education. The coordinator works with a team of representatives named by the regional office directors. Each ministry regional office is responsible for the development of one question. Usually, the regional office personnel are paired with individuals in specific Ministry of Education branches. For instance, the Legislation Branch participates in the development of the school law question, and the Curriculum Branch (now two centres) in the development of the curriculum question. In addition, the core team also meets with the directors of the various branches of the ministry for input.

In the early stages, the regional education councils have some limited involvement. However, as the development of the examination progresses, council members play a decreasing role. The number of persons involved in question development decreases in order to maintain confidentiality. Selected individuals may be seconded to the examination development team, but all are sworn to secrecy. According to the provincial coordinator of the examination process, the questions generally reflect the perception of ministry officials concerning what supervisory officers need to know and what constitute the current issues in the field. For each question developed, the writers provide an illustrative answer that includes the key points of a correct response. The level of detail of these answers varies markedly ranging from fully developed essays to point-form outlines. The first draft of the school law question is examined by an outside consultant for "objectivity". At this stage in the process, approximately 20 supervisory officers from the Mowat Block try the examination.

The written examination draft is then sent to the Deputy Minister of Education and to the Assistant Deputy Ministers for their approval. Questions may be eliminated or reworded, and the draft is sent back to the provincial coordinator's office for translation and printing. In 1986, the written examination

development process took from mid-August to mid-November. According to Johnson (1986) the examination questions are marked by the same Ministry of Education personnel who prepared them:

> "Initial marking is done in conference to assure consistency of expectation. At the outset a few examinations are marked by different examiners three or four times to further ensure consistency. All examinations within five marks of sixty per cent are re-read by at least one additional marker" (p. 10).

Question books are collected at the end of each examination session, so that questions are not made public. The multiple-choice questions are kept confidential, as a bank of such questions has been developed for use on subsequent examinations. Apparently the ministry will provide copies of previously used essay questions if requested to do so, but this possibility did not seem to be publicized. The examination is open-book, in that candidates are allowed to bring in copies of the Education Act and the Regulations. No other material is allowed. Candidates are expected to have a detailed knowledge of the Acts and Regulations, as well as of a wide range of Ministry of Education policies as outlined in the list of study materials provided to candidates.

10.3.2. The oral examination

Information in this section comes from interviews with supervisory officers in the research sample (all of which took place in 1986), information from written evaluations of the process given by examination panelists for the 1986 examinations, and information provided by the Ministry of Education. We observed briefing sessions and were given sample questions in the spring of 1987, but did not interview candidates for the 1987 examinations.

In March of each year, candidates are eligible to take the oral examination if they have previously passed the written one. Johnson (1986) describes the objectives of the oral examination as follows:

> "The purpose of the current oral interview for the examination is to consider how well the candidate is able to apply his or her knowledge and experience. When replying to questions that are posed, the candidate reveals judgement, tact and political/ interpersonal sensitivity in hypothesized leadership situations. The candidate indicates the ability to articulate an educational philosophy and the value base that undergirds this philosophy in relation to the goals for education in Ontario. The process of the interview indicates the extent to which a candidate is able to inspire confidence and demonstrate professional integrity. The intent is to see if the candidate is able to communicate ideas clearly and convincingly just as a practicing supervisory officer has to encourage a reluctant school board to consider new policy directions" (p. 12).

The oral examination is 35 minutes in length. Following each interview, the examination panel has a further 25 minutes to reach a decision about the candidate. Given the crucial role of the oral examination, and the brevity of the time available for it, the research team thought it vital to observe all aspects of the process. An informed observer would attempt to judge the extent to which the interview objectives were achieved, and would be alert for any unintended trends or outcomes. Several months prior to the 1987 oral examinations, permission to observe was requested from the ministry. Although we were granted permission to observe the briefing and preparation sessions provided for the examination panels, we were unable to observe any actual examinations. The official ministry response to our request was that direct observation of an oral examination would not be permitted "in deference to the candidates who are under a good deal of stress during the oral examination". Unfortunately, since the decision was not made until shortly before the oral examinations were to take place, there was insufficient time to arrange for alternative data collection methods, such as interviewing successful and unsuccessful candidates following the process.

Despite this gap in our data, we still have a wealth of information about the oral examination. The ministry was most generous in providing us with material, including questions prepared by examination panels, and evaluation sheets completed by examiners. Many of the interview respondents talked extensively about the certification process, from the points of view both of candidates, and of those concerned with appointing well-qualified supervisory officers. Finally, we were able to observe three of the day-long briefing sessions held for the examination panels.

The examination teams are composed of five examiners, three from the ministry and two from boards of education. Each team is chaired by one of the Ministry of Education representatives. There is always at least one female on every examination panel. The board representatives are qualified supervisory officers, generally well-experienced, one from a public board and the other from a separate board. The list of board officers from which the examiners are chosen is drawn up by regional office personnel, and submitted to the provincial examination coordinator, who then selects the examiners. When some of the examiners were asked informally if they knew how they were chosen, no one was aware of the system used.

Our observations of the briefing sessions for the oral examination panels showed that the groups followed the same general guidelines, but implementation of these guidelines was shaped in each panel by such factors as the previous experience of the participants, the leadership style of the chairman, any specific concerns of individual examiners, and the interpersonal dynamics of the group. Ministry staff provided each team with written evaluative criteria from which members were to develop questions. They were also asked to develop model answers as a basis for assessing those candidates. Most of the teams identified some broad areas and then individual members agreed to think about possible questions in those areas. The groups observed by the researchers usually agreed that the questions would be written out and sent to other members of the group prior to the examination. Most groups met to review questions and answers, generally the evening before, or in the morning just before the exam.

The dynamics of the oral examination panels varied appreciably during the orientation sessions. In some teams, the ministry chairperson exerted strong directive leadership, while in others individual members seemed more likely to raise issues of concern. The discussion was wide-ranging, with considerable time spent on orienting new members to the dynamics of the process. However, there appeared to be little discussion of the actual objectives for the oral examination. It was assumed that the team members were familiar with the objectives or would be able to deduce them from the evaluative criteria. (Many of the examiners were experienced).

The materials provided to each team member suggested that "it is critical for each panel to develop a pool of questions that flow from the evaluation criteria based upon the key guideline principles". Written materials given to each oral examiner suggested that each candidate be asked questions covering the following broad categories:

- the curriculum process and curriculum implementation
- current issues
- philosophy of education
- conflict resolution
- supervision in administration
- school finance
- special education concerns
- applications of school law to hypothesized situations.

Some teams explored the possibility of varying the questions, because candidates were seen to have well-developed informal communication networks that might allow questions to be passed to other candidates prior to their examinations. As in the written examination, the questions used by each oral examination panel are not made public, however the research team was given copies of some of the questions.

The provincial coordinator emphasized that the approach in 1987 would focus on the use of case scenarios as sources of questions. Questions would be framed as follows: "If you were confronted with the following situation ... what would you do?" The idea was to avoid questions focused on the content of the Act and Regulations (which are covered in the written examination), focusing instead on application of knowledge and exercise of professional judgment. One example concerned a teacher whose performance was not satisfactory, and the questions dealt almost entirely with the steps required to deal with the situation, as outlined in the Act and Regulations. Another question asked how a candidate would determine the extent of OSIS implementation in the schools, and asked "what specific aspects of OSIS would you look for in your monitoring?" However, it is important to point out that our data are somewhat limited with regard to this issue. The ministry provided us with a sample of questions prepared by the oral examination panels (questions from four panels). We have not seen the other questions, nor did we observe the oral examinations.

We do not underestimate the difficulty of the task facing the examination panels. They are composed of practising supervisory officers who are busy with the many demands of their roles. They have limited time to meet together and to develop questions for the oral examination. Panels hesitate to use the same questions with different candidates because candidates are thought to report to each other on the questions they were asked, and yet when different questions are used, it is difficult to ensure that they are comparable, either in difficulty level or the kind of knowledge and skill required. This situation presents some difficulty in arriving at comparable evaluations of candidates.

The examiners were told that each would have the opportunity to ask one question, and were urged to maintain accurate records of the candidates' responses. In the briefing sessions, panelists were given evaluation forms that allowed room for them to score candidates' performance on the basis of their philosophy and goals of education, leadership (defined as the application and communication of knowledge, understanding, and skills), and professional integrity (defined as the ability to inspire confidence). Comments during the briefing sessions suggested that a few did use the evaluation form as intended, while others used it to guide their thinking about a candidate's responses. Some did not seem to find it necessary, preferring to record information about candidates in some other form.

Most members of the oral examination panels that we observed expressed positive views about the process, both in conversation, and while they were working with their fellow panelists. They felt strongly that they knew what a good supervisory officer was, and were confident of their ability to make sound judgements based on the candidate's performance in the interview.

Unsuccessful candidates are telephoned personally by a Ministry of Education official. They are provided with some feedback on their performance, drawn from notes supplied by the oral examiners.

10.4. The examination: successes and failures

The written examination in 1987 was offered in 6 centres. It was written on January 16 by 321 candidates, 154 of whom passed. Candidates were informed of the results in February. Oral examinations were conducted in 5 centres (Central, Eastern, Northeastern, Northwestern and Western regions) on March 24, 25 and 26, 1987.

As noted earlier, the Ministry of Education statistics on pass/fail rates for the supervisory officer examinations are not always consistent. However, the figures used in this report to illustrate pass/fail rates are all based on the same types of data for each of the years 1980 through 1987, and are thus, in our opinion, comparable. (They may differ slightly from some of the formal statistics released by the ministry.) Table 10-2 outlines the pass rates for all of the males and females who tried the written and oral examinations from 1980 through 1987. In each year from 1981 on, on the written examination, female candidates experienced a higher success rate than male candidates. On the oral examination, results by sex are more varied, but female candidates have usually had a higher pass rate.

Table 10-2: Pass Rates for Male and Female Candidates 1980 - 1987

	Written Exam			Oral Exam		
	Overall %	Male %	Female %	Overall %	Male %	Female %
1980	74	74	74	72	71	74
1981	70	61	72	65	71	65
1982	32	43	48	62	70	70
1983	36	33	45	64	60	74
1984	35	34	37	57	59	60
1985	50	49	51	51	49	56
1986	47	45	49	50	46	59
1987	49	45	55	52	53	50

Table 10-2 raises a major policy question. Pass rates in the written examination have usually been below 50 per cent. On the oral examinations, there have also been high failure rates in recent years. Failure rates of this magnitude raise questions concerning the cost effectiveness of the process in both administrative and human terms.

Several trends merit comment. As Table 10-3 indicates, only a small percentage of the certificates are awarded to francophones, but the figure seems attributable to the low application rate of candidates from this language group. With the recent growth of French-language programs in Ontario school boards, one might predict that this figure will increase in the years to come. (As noted earlier, the method of defining a candidate as francophone may artificially lower the recorded number.) Secondly, there are very few business candidates. The scarcity may be the result of factors such as the possible inappropriateness of the examinations for business personnel, and the difficulty they face in gaining access to diploma courses required to qualify for the examination. Also, as noted in Chapter 5, business supervisory officers tend to stay in their jobs much longer, so there may be fewer job openings. However, ministry statistics show that of the 811 supervisory officers employed in boards, 16 per cent are business officials, yet only 3 per cent of

Table 10-3: Percentage of Certificates Awarded to Francophone Candidates and Business Candidates

	Francophone Candidates %	Business Candidates %
1980	8	5
1981	11	2
1982	3	3
1983	n/a	n/a
1984	7	6
1985	7	3
1986	2	3

the supervisory officer certificates were awarded to business candidates, suggesting that there may be a shortage of qualified candidates as present incumbents retire. Respondents interviewed in the study often expressed reservations about requiring business candidates to be certified, although they were concerned about a perceived loss of credibility if they were not.

A third policy issue is the inefficiency of the process. A relatively low percentage of those receiving certificates between 1980 and 1986 were first-time candidates; in most years, 40 to 50 per cent of those receiving certificates tried the examinations at least twice. However, first time candidates are more likely to pass the examination (pass rate of approximately 60 per cent). There are no retraining requirements for those who fail; they may simply apply to write as many times as they wish.

The application process is so open that anyone who meets the minimum requirements is eligible to apply. It should be noted that this openness represents a deliberate decision on the part of the ministry. At one time, directors of education submitted letters of recommendation for candidates (although such letters did not determine the candidate's eligibility), but the practice was discontinued following criticism about perpetuating an "old boys' system". There are no disincentives in the form of financial penalties associated with applications for examination, since there is no application fee, no examination fee and no withdrawal fee. There is a high attrition rate in the current process, with many candidates withdrawing prior to the actual examinations. In 1986, for instance, 153 (28 per cent) of those accepted withdrew, while the 1985 and 1984 figures were 23 per cent and 22 per cent respectively.

10.5. The examination: Some appraisals

10.5.1. The oral examiners' comments

Following the 1986 examination, the oral examiners were asked to comment and make suggestions. Their comments were both positive and negative. For instance, to the question, "Are the criteria for judging the candidates sufficiently well specified?", responses were evenly divided between those who thought they were, and those who disagreed. Positive comments included the following observations:

- Yes, I believe that the in-service day held for all those who sat on the orals did much to emphasize the criteria for judging.
- Yes, the criteria are specific enough. They allow some room for judgement...
- Yes, they are, but as in many oral examinations the first candidate is always the hardest to judge. As long as we can re-assess our judgement of the first candidate, things are fair.

- Yes, any additional specificity could tend to make the process too mechanical.
- I don't think that they can be more specific.

Other examiners, in making suggestions for improving the process, noted the following:

- There was cause to wonder if this particular team had expectations which were congruent with other teams.
- Criteria need to be more defined. Supervisory Services Branch should provide more direction to oral panels on how to judge candidates. Panel members had to rely too much on their subjective evaluation.
- There was too much apparent variation from team to team. Refining and deciding on criteria needs to be done earlier than this year, and needs to be openly shared with candidates.
- I have a concern that some candidates may be facing more difficult questions than other candidates.
- I am concerned, however, that each group was allowed to establish its own standards and procedures for assessing candidates. This procedure obviously results in inconsistency.

Several other concerns were expressed by the examiners. Some noted that the time for examining each candidate is very tight, and suggested a longer interview would be fairer to the candidate and would allow examiners to ask their questions fully. Others questioned the basic purposes of the examination, despite statements in writing and orally by the coordinator of examinations that the panels were to examine candidates as individuals qualifying for a provincial licence and not as job applicants. Apparently it is not easy for examiners to distinguish between these two approaches.

In spite of their concerns about criteria, many of the examiners commented favourably on the examination process. They felt strongly that the procedures for conducting the examination were efficient and that the composition of the examination panels was appropriate. Even those who were critical of the process as a certification procedure felt they had benefitted from taking part. One panel member stated that the experience was of great personal and professional value, while another, a director of education, saw it as an interesting experience that every director should go through.

10.5.2. Interview respondents

Data in this section are the perceptions of supervisory officers interviewed in the research sample.

When asked about the necessity of provincial certification for supervisory officers, those interviewed expressed overwhelming support for continuing to require it in some form. The most frequent reason given for this support was the standardization it is seen to provide across the province. The second most frequent reason was that the exam hurdle serves as an excellent vehicle to promote study of the education regulations and literature by potential candidates. Others said that certification made supervisory officers more credible, provided protection from trustees, and resulted in more respectability, status, and consistency. Respondents did not justify the certification process on the basis of relevance to job performance. There was, furthermore, a very strong belief that the Ministry of Education should be involved in the process, either solely or in co-operation with other groups, such as faculties of education, OAEAO, teachers' federations, and trustee groups.

While there was strong support for maintaining certification, the interviewees were in favour of reforming the examination process. Many respondents supported the idea of an examination, although in many cases support was given for the written exam and not the oral, or vice versa. The main criticism of the examination process was that it does not assess key skills, such as interpersonal skills, which are vital to the role of the supervisory officer. For instance, two superintendents commented as follows:

- "Candidates should go through a training program, for example, an internship. On the basis of this, candidates could be screened and qualify for an exam based on their problem solving skills and people skills."
- "It [the exam] assesses your ability to study the law, to write an examination and to be articulate in an interview. It doesn't assess your ability to resolve crises, to mediate, to team build ... it only assesses your ability to describe team building."

Respondents often felt unable to comment on the process because they did not know how it operated. Some of these supervisory officers had little information or experience concerning the examinations, while others felt it was difficult to assess the information they had. As one recent successful candidate put it, "The whole process is a mystery to me. I don't know what they were looking for, or what the criteria were. I had no idea whether or not the interview was going well." Those who did comment raised concerns about various aspects of the examinations, as the following quotations taken from interview data indicate:

- "Eliminate the exam because it is irrelevant. Boards should have training programs the way industry does."
- "The current selection process is not really a good selection for what is needed to be a good supervisory officer **e.g.**, interpersonal skills, coping with parents. There is too much emphasis on Acts and Regulations in detail while we only need an overview. There should be an internship before taking the exam."
- "It is too nebulous. People do not understand what it takes to pass or fail."
- "The exam system doesn't work very well - some people are good at it and some people are not good. There needs to be some way to discover human skills - interpersonal skills."
- "Exams are set up for academics, not business people. They are too biased for business people to be able to pass."
- "The current supervisory officer exam is like buying a 649 lottery ticket. It is arbitrary. Panels are not guided by uniform criteria. You would get dealt with differently depending on where the candidate goes. Also, there is a paper chase. You can go in with a pile of paper and I emphasize, *it is not a serious certification process.*"
- "Should be much more emphasis on on-the-job performance, and much less on the exams."

Several supervisory officers interviewed during the study also expressed misgivings abut the nature of the candidates who applied and were successful. Illustrative comments include:

- "There is a problem with the exam not being effective: some good people fail, some poor ones pass."
- "... I know of a strong principal who was unsuccessful ... the person you know is able to do the essential parts of the job was unsuccessful!"
- "The best candidates are not coming forward. The exams are deterring the best candidates."
- "I have mixed feelings about the exam - it doesn't select the best ... we miss the best people and sometimes we humiliate them."
- "We are not yet identifying the best people."

10.6. Costs and benefits

The examination process, as currently structured, is expensive. The Ministry of Education estimated that the direct costs in 1986 for printing, postage, storage, translation, travel and accommodation for examiners, and the candidate study kit totalled almost $70,000. Indirect costs, including the coordinator's time, clerical time, registrars' salaries, statistical services, estimated costs for interviewers' time and costs for marking swelled the total cost of the examination process to over $285,000 in 1986. (This rough cost estimate excludes other normal overhead costs such as fringe benefits, space rental and utilities.) The process also has some hidden costs, particularly the emotional damage to candidates as a result of the extremely high failure rates in both oral and written examinations. There are also costs associated with the fact that of the 2240 persons with supervisory officer qualifications in Ontario, more than half (approximately 1300) are not in supervisory officer jobs. Although these persons make up the pool from which vacancies are filled, many of them will never be appointed to such positions.

10.7. Implications

A number of questions and concerns have been raised about the current certification process, particularly the written and oral examinations. To the extent that the written examination tests one's knowledge of the legislation, regulations, and policies of the ministry, then it can assess candidates adequately. However, once the examination moves from these topics to administrative concerns and organizational theory, its efficacy becomes open to question.

The oral examination provokes far more serious concerns. Its stated purposes are so broad that it is unrealistic to assume they can be met in one 35-minute examination. Because so many of the purposes involve judgement, even the most rigorously developed examination could not escape claims of bias or subjectivity. Even the examiners raise concerns about the lack of consistent evaluation criteria, as well as variability in the type and difficulty of questions.

The low pass rates, in both examinations, might be explained by one or more of several factors. Perhaps the eligibility criteria are too broad, the training is inadequate, the examination questions are inappropriate, or the grading criteria are unrealistic. Certainly such high failure rates carry both human and economic costs for the candidates and the system.

While the number of females trying the examination is increasing and their success rates are the same as or higher than those of males, their numbers still are not representative of their numbers in the educational work force. The trend, however, is positive. The number of francophones trying and passing the examinations is low and is a cause for concern, as is the number of business-oriented candidates. Finally, the administration of the system needs some control. The attrition rate of applicants for the examinations is too high. The costs of those drop-outs are significant. Similarly, the free, open-ended process which allows unlimited attempts to pass the examinations escalates costs. (Costs should be passed on to candidates through a realistic fee structure.)

In summary, our data indicate that the people involved in the examination process, whether in developing questions or assessing candidates, perform well within the constraints of their roles. They take great care with choosing questions, with preparing material, with grappling with questions of fairness and so on. However, serious questions remain with the process itself.

Based on interview data, information provided by the ministry, and observations of the briefing sessions, our assessment of the difficulties with the process can be summarized as follows:

1. Because of concerns about confidentiality, the process is perceived as somewhat mysterious, making it difficult to know what criteria are being applied. The lack of disclosure also makes it difficult to improve the system. It is not, therefore, surprising that there appears to be inconsistency in the evaluation process and the criteria used, particularly in the oral examination.
2. The examination is not linked to any training or preparation program.
3. The examination process is financially very costly.
4. The success or failure of candidates in the examination process often does not correspond with judgements made by supervisory officers about who in their school systems would be successful supervisory officers. Qualities needed to pass the examination may not be the ones most important in successfully doing the job.

The concerns are perhaps best expressed in a direct quotation from one of the directors interviewed in our study:

"I believe that the present process for the certification and training of potential supervisory officers is inadequate, inappropriate and hopelessly out of touch with current needs in school systems across the province. It is also counter productive. For years, many boards have had the experience of people being successful in the examinations who are not ever likely to be principals, never mind supervisory officers, while principals whom we would view as strong candidates for supervisory officer positions have been unsuccessful. There seems to be more correlation between being a good student, preferably a recent or life-time student, than there is in having the characteristics that would make a person a good supervisory officer. If we really believe in the usefulness of education in developing the skills that people need to assume new responsibilities, we should be supporting a professional development program rather than some kind of artificial hurdle or barrier."

The certification system obviously needs to be reconsidered. One could suggest tinkering with it to recover some of the costs, to deal with perceived inconsistencies, or to ensure that questions are more closely related to the actualities of the job. However, in our view, such improvements would not solve the basic problems with the present system.

The current examination process, with its written and oral components, is not related to any articulated process by which candidates can develop the skills they need to assume the responsibilities of a supervisory officer. Furthermore, with several hundred candidates applying each year, the system has become unwieldy. In our interviews throughout the province, we frequently heard, from directors, supervisory officers, principals and others, that the examination process was irrelevant to the difficult task of preparing and selecting supervisory officers, and was somewhat out of touch with the current needs of school systems. These perceptions cannot be ignored, since they influence the credibility and effectiveness of the certification process. We believe that, given the complexity and enormity of the task, the current examination process functions as well as might be expected, and the people involved, both from the ministry and the field, operate in a professional manner. The difficulty is more fundamental: the process itself is no longer appropriate. The numbers of candidates, and even more, the increasing complexity of the role, have outstripped the capacity of a "one-shot" examination system to determine qualified candidates.

In short, consideration of the relationship of the current certification process to the demands of the role itself, as outlined in Chapters 6 and 9, leads us to the view that a new model is needed. This model should link preparation, certification, selection and ongoing professional development in a framework that is closely tied to the demands of the role, and thus to the needs of school systems for effective management and educational leadership. We present such a model in Chapter 12.

PART C: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SUPERVISORY OFFICERS

Chapter 11
Supervisory Officers in the Ontario Ministry of Education

Data were collected from on-site interviews with supervisory officers in three regional offices and the Mowat Block, as described in Chapter 5. The analysis of ministry data was performed separately from the analysis of board data, using the same quantitative and qualitative techniques. This chapter explores the responses of ministry supervisory officers within the same framework as the exploration of board responses. Thus this chapter follows the general pattern of Chapters 6 through 9, looking at the findings from ministry data under the same general headings as were used for board data. Throughout this chapter attempts will be made to compare and contrast the ministry findings with board findings. In addition, where appropriate, comparisons will be made between supervisory officers at the regional level and supervisory officers at the provincial (Mowat Block) level. Two limitations must first be addressed. First, since the sample of ministry officers interviewed was much smaller than the sample of board officers, some of the finer details afforded by a larger sample are missing. Second, much of the conceptual classification and analysis of the data has been covered in Chapters 6 to 9, and is therefore not repeated here. Readers should bear in mind that since this chapter depends so heavily on Chapters 6 to 9, it cannot properly be read and understood in isolation from them.

11.1. Sample

Both internal and published job descriptions were requested and received from each of the six regional education offices and Queen's Park (the Mowat Block). The study team also received and analysed line diagrams and descriptions of administrative structures and role definitions within each centre. Additional statements on regional operating procedures, performance appraisal policies, professional development options, and other data specific to regional initiatives were also obtained and have been considered in this report.

Four centres were selected for on-site visitation. Three were regional offices chosen as representative of the activities of such offices, and the fourth was the provincial Ministry of Education itself (the Mowat Block).

A total of 74 structured interviews were completed: 44 in the three regional offices and 30 in the Mowat Block. Interviewee experience ranged from new appointments and secondments to career incumbents at the director and assistant deputy minister levels. Respondents were interviewed with substantially the same interview schedule used with board supervisory officers. Interviewees also completed the general questionnaire and the stress profile instrument. Thus data were collected from three sources: the pre-interview questionnaire which provided numerical information; the structured interview; and the questionnaire relating to role stress, which was completed after the interview. Further information regarding the ministry interviewees is given in Chapter 5, section 5.3.

For purposes of first-stage analysis, all interviewees were grouped together, regardless of role or location. Second-stage analysis involved looking for differences between roles and locations. If such differences were found, they are identified and described. The reader is reminded, however, of the size of the sample and some of its subgroups, and of the impact of sample size on the analysis.

11.2. What do ministry supervisory officers do?

Ministry supervisory officers were asked to state what they consider their major responsibilities. The difference between Mowat Block and regional office positions becomes immediately evident in the responses to this question. The majority of Mowat Block supervisory officers list as their major responsibility the supervision of a specific program or policy area, and the next largest group list the development of a specific program or policy. Only one regional office supervisory officer reported being concerned with program development, and none reported being primarily responsible for the supervision of a specific program or policy. The majority of regional office supervisory officers said that their major responsibility is to act as liaison between the ministry and the local boards. The next most common responses list the monitoring of policy and program implementation and the direct supervision and inspection of schools as major responsibilities. These three responsibilities account for most regional office supervisory officer time, but none were mentioned by Mowat Block officers.

Responsibilities vary from region to region. In regions where there are many isolate boards, supervision of these boards is a very important and time-consuming responsibility. In areas where boards are larger, regional office supervisory officers tend to spend more time interpreting ministry policy and documents to local boards.

The most striking aspect of the responses of Mowat Block officers is the specificity of their assignments. Board supervisory officers tend to have broad assignments covering operations or program throughout the system (see Chapter 6). Regional office supervisory officers also talked about general assignments:

"...I respond to the needs of local boards"

"...I monitor curriculum implementation in the local boards"

"...I supervise three isolated boards."

Mowat Block officers, however, talked about developing or supervising tightly focused programs and policies:

"I develop and monitor distance programs"

"I am responsible for driver education"

"I am responsible for race relations policy."

In the Mowat Block, supervisory officers tend to work, usually for a specific period of time, on one or two fine details of program or policy, and do so with great intensity. In regional offices, supervisory officers have broader, less well-defined areas of responsibility which, of necessity, involve responding to the needs and dictates of both local boards and the ministry on demand.

When responsibilities are broken down into tasks, the problem of answering the question "What do supervisory officers in the ministry do?" is no easier than it was for board officers (Chapter 6). The range of activities is extremely broad, as the following quotations from both Mowat Block and regional office supervisory officers illustrate:

"I give legal interpretations to boards."

"I write reports on independent schools."

"I collect data for politicians' speeches."

"I arrange meetings of computer people from boards."

"I'm reviewing the Science course guidelines."

"I evaluate the capital needs of boards."

"I handle all correspondence related to Bill 30."

"I coordinate dealings with the federal government over immigration."

"I supervise three isolate boards."

As with board officers, the tasks given range from the very specific to the very general, from the concrete to the abstract. Clustering of tasks, in the same way in which board officer tasks were clustered, confirms the impression that supervisory officers in the Mowat Block do different work from those in regional offices. The work in regional offices, however, is apparently substantially similar from region to region. As with the board officers, the experience of an officer in one region may be different in emphasis or contextual factors from that of an officer in another region. Therefore, while the jobs then appear different, the differences do not seem to affect the nature of the tasks performed.

11.2.1. Task profiles

The preliminary overview of responsibilities indicated that regional office and Mowat Block positions differ. Profiles of typical tasks, therefore, are drawn separately for the two groups.

11.2.1.1. Regional office

Regional office responsibilities tend to focus on the issues and needs of the particular region, but many of the actual tasks performed are common. All regional office respondents mentioned that they spend a lot of time in information brokerage - interpreting policy to boards, consulting with local boards, facilitating implementation through explanation, making reports back to the ministry, collecting regional data and so on. One officer put this very succinctly:

"I am a clearing house for information."

The pivotal nature of the position of the regional office supervisory officer, at the interface between the ministry and the local board, makes the incumbent of necessity an interpreter and facilitator.

Regional officers are also frequently involved in direct supervision. They are often responsible for inspecting and monitoring independent schools and where there are isolate boards, with no supervisory officers of their own, regional officers fulfil that role. In addition, the regional officers believe it is their task to monitor how local boards are implementing ministry programs and policies. In most cases the officers contribute to implementation by providing information, support and enthusiasm, but, should a board prove recalcitrant in following a ministry policy or guideline, it is the regional supervisory officer who must first deal with the situation. Several intense rounds of negotiation with the local authorities may be required before the situation is resolved.

Regional officers are generally on the front line with respect to financial matters. Local boards make their assessments or applications for capital grants, often with the help of a ministry officer, and the regional office personnel process and evaluate these.

Because the regional office performs so many varied tasks, some of its officers must devote time and energy to actually running the office. Administering office personnel, reviewing and refining procedures and coordinating activities are all tasks which must be attended to.

Many other agencies have interests which overlap or complement education, and maintaining contact with these agencies to coordinate joint interests is another important task of regional supervisory officers.

Writing is not one of the most common tasks of regional officers, but nonetheless it is a task which must be performed on demand, often at short notice. Typically regional officers must write reports or reviews for submission to the appropriate sector of the ministry. Correspondence is also important to the regional officer as part of his/her role as information broker.

In addition, regional officers are frequently involved in regional and/or provincial advisory committees, policy groups, and certification procedures, where their expertise in a subject or pedagogical area can be put to good use.

Some of the tasks of regional officers described above are illustrated in these interview responses:

"I work on cooperative reviews of local board programs."

"I participate in the regional advisory committee on computers."

"I write private school assessments."

"I develop capital forecasts and budgets for the region."

"I handle certification enquiries from the region."

"I draft and redraft correspondence."

"I prepare briefing data and summaries for senior ministry officials."

"I act as liaison with the Faculty of Education."

"I handle all professional development enquiries and requests such as Additional Qualification Courses, Principals' Courses, Professional Activity Days, and Supervisory Officer seminars."

11.2.1.2. Mowat Block

Not only is there a considerable difference between the expectations for jobs in the Mowat Block and those in regional offices but also among the Mowat Block roles themselves. The specificity of many Mowat Block positions makes it difficult to draw a typical profile. In general, however, Mowat Block officers assume roles which respond to provincial demands. Most of their assignments require significant time commitments to policy development and interpretation activities that form the major components of the position.

A major portion of time is spent on drafting, circulating, and developing policy statements. Authorized policy statements may be converted to legislation and/or circulated throughout the province. Provincial dissemination requires implementation and interpretation, both of which require major time

allocations. Similarly, a great deal of time is spent on drafting, discussing, developing and revising program outlines. Drafts are field-tested and the feedback from the tests must be incorporated into redrafts. Finally, official documents must be created for publication. An officer might be assigned to one or more of these program development groups for the duration of a particular project.

Like their regional colleagues, but to a lesser extent, Mowat Block officers act as information brokers, providing interpretation and consultation on demand to local boards and other agencies. Many interpretations are given over the telephone. The usual procedure is for a telephone enquiry to be directed to a particular supervisory officer, who is expected, by virtue of expertise or assignment, to be able to answer readily. Other interpretations, however, are given in written form. "Ghost writing" draft correspondence for politicians and senior ministry officials was emphasized repeatedly as a major job component. Many Mowat Block interviewees commented on the heavy time demands placed on them by tasks relating to correspondence. They must draft, redraft, and process correspondence through a complicated verification and approval process. Correspondence of this type often requires careful review of the Education Act and regulations and can require contributions from several officers. At times a "turn around" period of several weeks is required to prepare an "approved" reply. Many responses indicated a perception that the current procedures are not at all efficient.

Liaison with other agencies was again another frequently mentioned task. A variety of constituencies are regularly in contact with ministry officers. Meetings with professional groups, school administrators, trustees, regional colleagues, business contacts, and special interest groups place varied demands on the time and knowledge of Mowat Block officers.

Some specific examples of tasks of Mowat Block officers are included in these responses:

"I coordinate and monitor programs in provincial schools."

"I coordinate negotiations with other ministries and federal granting sources."

"I coordinate activities associated with the Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool." [Bill 30, Bill 75 and other specific programs or policies were also mentioned]

"I manage research grants and contracts."

"I coordinate curriculum guideline development in History."

"I review hundreds of submissions for financial support for things such as computers, research, learning materials, textbooks, capital buildings, and so on."

"I administer and participate in the supervisory officer certification process, screening applicants, developing examination questions, administering the examination and evaluating candidates."

"I collect field responses to policy and analyse them."

"I am planning and developing Science curriculum."

"I am drafting guidelines for O.A.C's."

11.2.2. Action/content analysis

The differences between board and ministry officer positions can be clarified by applying the action/content analysis used in Chapter 6 to the work of ministry supervisory officers. The seven "key actions" identified for board officers seem equally applicable to ministry officers, both regionally and in the Mowat Block. These are:

a). Review or evaluate

b). Advise or support

c). Develop or formulate

d). Coordinate

e). Ensure compliance

f). Solve problems

g). Plan or forecast

The analysis further identified five major areas of content or focus in which board officers operate. The ministry supervisory officers also appear to operate within these areas:

a). Curriculum and program

b). Personnel

c). Finance

d). Professional development

e). Physical facilities

Despite superficial similarities in the work content of board and ministry officers, variations in scope are very broad; while board officers focus on a single system, ministry officers operate on a regional and/or provincial level. Differences also emerge when action-content matrices such as in Figure 6-2 are developed for ministry officers. Regional officers can be seen to perform the same common core of actions as board officers, but the focus of the action differs greatly. Regional officers spend a lot of time advising and supporting, but they advise and support board supervisory officers more often than trustees or principals. Similarly, they ensure compliance by monitoring different school systems rather than individual teachers. As with the analysis of board officers, however, the data lead to the conclusion that the common core of actual tasks for board officers is also common to regional officers, even though the arena for action and the contextual factors differ greatly.

What is true of board officers and regional officers is even more true of Mowat Block officers. They do indeed perform the same actions as their colleagues, but the arena for action is very different. Moreover, because Mowat Block assignments are frequently highly specific, an individual supervisory officer might perform tasks in only a very small section of the matrix during any one period of time. During that period other action and content capabilities lie dormant. Given this tendency, secondments of individuals with specific expertise from boards to limited-term tasks in the ministry are probably quite appropriate. In sum, the major difference between Mowat Block officers and any of their colleagues seems to be a matter of focus.

11.2.3. Interactions with people

Examination of the literature (Chapter 3) showed that the key feature of a supervisory officer's role is interaction with others. Analysis of board supervisory officer responses (Chapter 6) confirmed that this was true for our sample of board officers. Analysis of the responses of ministry officers shows the same central importance. Indeed, as with board officers, dealing with people is the essence of the job.

Regional officers deal primarily with two groups, school boards and the ministry. This finding confirms the point made earlier that the regional officer occupies a pivotal position between these groups. In their board interactions, regional officers deal occasionally with trustees, principals, and teachers, but more routinely with senior administrators and directors. Dealings with the Mowat Block tend to be less direct and personal. Directives from the Mowat Block, new legislation, and policies all affect the work of the regional officer, but do not always involve much face-to-face interaction. Thus, although the Mowat Block has great impact on the work of the regional officer, personal interactions occur more frequently with local board officials.

It is not surprising that virtually all Mowat Block officers report that they interact most with their own colleagues. Much interaction occurs during formally scheduled meetings and planning sessions, much informally and spontaneously as needs dictate. These intensive communications form the key element in the development and administration of policy and program – the fundamental mandate of the ministry. Mowat Block officers also interact often with other agencies and on occasion with regional office personnel and school system supervisory officers.

The observation was made in Chapter 6 that dealing with others is the most striking feature of a supervisory officer's role. It was also noted that the pace varies from long, slow meetings to instantaneous, spontaneous interactions. This variation in pace seems equally true for ministry officers. Regional officers deal with a much wider range of people in a wider variety of ways than do board officers. Mowat Block officers, on the other hand, do not interact with a wide range of people. Many deal almost exclusively with one another; for these officers, intensive exchanges with colleagues form the kernel of their productive work.

11.2.4. Expectations of others

Ministry officers were asked to describe the expectations that others hold for them. Regional officers predictably saw two major sources of outside expectations – the ministry and the local boards. They perceived that local boards generally expect them to provide expert information on demand and assistance as required. The following are some specific statements drawn from interviews:

"They expect me to have curriculum expertise."

"They want me to know all about other ministries as well."

"They want on-the-spot interpretation."

"I have to be certain on regulations."

"They want answers, right away."

"I am expected to keep them out of trouble."

"I am expected to keep up to date."

"They think that I can influence the ministry to do what they want, and if they just tell me that will do it."

"They want me to provide direction in implementation."

Regional officers perceive that the ministry expects them to be able to respond to boards but also to "wear a ministry hat":

"They expect me to wear a ministry hat and that creates the myth that I can solve a variety of problems."

"I have to know all the policies and be prepared to take criticism on behalf of the ministry."

"I am supposed to ensure compliance."

"I am expected not to cause the ministry political problems or embarrassment."

"They [the Mowat Block] expect me to get a feel for what is going on in the region."

The impression given is that regional officers must deal with the expectations of local boards, even though these may not always be realistic, while bearing in mind all of the expectations of the ministry. Sometimes these expectations conflict, and sometimes they add up to a tall order.

Mowat Block officers perceive major expectations arising from three major sources: the ministry itself, the regional offices, and school systems. By and large they describe the same expectations from school systems as do regional office colleagues:

"They want me to give service where they cannot."

"They want the government to act now and they think I can make that happen."

"They expect insight and knowledge of policy."

"They want a clear articulation of policy."

"They assume that because I am a ministry person I have answers on all ministry policies."

"They expect me to have a broad base of knowledge of the legislation."

In providing information directly to school systems, some Mowat Block officers see themselves as acting, at least part of the time, as supplementary sources to the regional offices. At the same time, they see themselves as an information source for the regional officers, who expect them to provide information in the same way that the regional officers provide information to school systems. This confirms the impression that the regional office is a mid-point between the school systems and the Mowat Block.

Mowat Block officers perceive the expectations of the ministry itself as more restricted and specific than do regional officers, a finding consistent with the earlier discussion about specificity of assignment. Expectations tend to be detailed and to refer to attitudes and orientations as well as tasks:

"I am expected to communicate well enough to avoid trouble."

"I must prepare letters that the Minister can safely sign."

"I must represent the ministry at all times, and sometimes that demands a lot of self control."

"I have to be able to prepare position papers or discussion papers on very short notice."

"They expect me to have the necessary information available so that they can answer any question quickly."

"They expect me to answer questions on the interpretation of materials and still meet publication deadlines."

Many ministry officers felt that the demands made on them are unreasonable. Regional officers complained that their political and administrative leaders do not understand some of the difficulties they encounter and set impossible deadlines. Most declared that, since expectations are frequently unreasonable, compromises are made and things work out somehow. These complaints are reminiscent of those board officers made about their political masters.

11.2.5. Context of work

11.2.5.1. Hours per week

Ministry officers reported an average of 48 hours a week on the job, slightly less than the average number declared by board officers. The range of total hours worked is narrower; fewer ministry than board officers reported excessively long hours, nor does their role or location appear to affect the amount of time they spend working.

Not many ministry officers report much evening work. Only about one in five reported occasional evening sessions, and then usually only one in a week. The slightly lower weekly average of hours for ministry officers is probably attributable to the infrequency of evening meetings in comparison with board officers.

11.2.5.2. Discretionary authority

If their statements are taken strictly at face value, 61 per cent of ministry officers do not feel especially constrained in their work, and 39 per cent do. At the same level of analysis, board officers felt much less constrained than their ministry colleagues. The question of course is sufficiently complex to require a more thorough analysis. Many officers listed as feeling relatively free in their actions qualified their initial statements in such a way that it became apparent that they meant that they were free only within limits. A sample of typical responses shows the ambiguity of feelings on this point:

"I probably don't have as much authority as I take."

"I have influence and discretion but no authority."

"Everything has to be approved higher up."

"I have a lot of power because I know the ropes."

"I can be very creative which is not the case with board officers."

"I must be the voice of the ministry regardless."

"I'm just a broker, decisions are made elsewhere."

"I am much more constrained than I was in a board – I can't come down hard on anyone."

"Within the boundaries of the organization, I have control over what I do."

"We [in the regional offices] make recommendations but everything has to be approved in Toronto."

In general, it appears that ministry officers do feel more constrained than board officers, but not many seem to be troubled by this. One notable exception is that there are a few regional officers who are quite resentful about what they perceive to be the centralization of authority in Toronto.

11.2.6. Impact on education

Data were collected directly only in regard to what ministry officers perceived to be the influence of regional offices on education in the province. The question, asking what would result if these offices were to close, was not generally well received. Some respondents did not consider the idea even worthy of contemplation. Those who did consider the idea painted a gloomy picture of "...fragmentation," "...disaster", "...chaos" and inequality. It was generally agreed that smaller boards would suffer most, especially in the north, and that local boards would be thrown very much on their own resources, thereby exacerbating inequalities. It was also agreed that the Mowat Block would experience a great deal of extra pressure, but at the same time would lose its information source and its tools to meet the demand. The only exception related to the closing of one regional office, which, as a result of its proximity to the Mowat Block, some respondents considered redundant.

By inference, therefore, it is possible to conclude that ministry officers perceive the impact of the regional offices to be primarily related to coordination of activities, liaison between boards and ministry, support to local boards, and data collection.

However, on the basis of the interviews and our own assessments of task descriptions, we believe ministry supervisory officers have less impact on education than they might. Questions arise about the involvement of regional supervisory officers in some relatively low-impact activities, such as repeated redrafting of correspondence, clerical duties undertaken because of lack of support, and program reviews or assessments that have no follow-up. We believe that effectiveness would be improved if such issues were dealt with.

11.2.7. Changes in the role

Many ministry officers saw the role of the ministry supervisory officer changing in the future. In most instances, this was seen as a natural extension of current trends. Many expected that the change begun in 1969 will continue as the ministry moves more and more from a supervisory into a facilitator role. The trend away from supervisory to curricular specialist appointments would have certain implications for hiring practices.

Another commonly expressed view, which on the surface seems contradictory to the first, is the expectation that the ministry will expand its role and become more involved in ensuring the quality of education at the school level. An increase in centralization would help to even out the inequalities among boards, which would be a priority for the ministry. The two ideas are not necessarily incompatible. One respondent suggested that there might be a division of roles for ministry officers: some would be educational specialists involved in development and facilitation, others would be administrative specialists ensuring compliance with policy and coping with political matters.

11.3. Selection and training

11.3.1. Selection

11.3.1.1. Numerical analysis

Most board officers were appointed from within the system, as observed in Chapters 5 and 7. Clearly, since ministry officers must gain their school based expertise outside the ministry, they must originally have been hired from outside. In the pre-interview questionnaire, ministry officers were asked whether they had been appointed to their current positions from within the ministry or from outside. As Chapter 5 notes, just over half (51 per cent) report having been hired from outside. Although the mean number of years on the job was 5, the majority of ministry officers (55 per cent) had been in their current positions less than 2 years. This suggests that a substantial number of ministry supervisory officers came recently from boards.

When regional office and Mowat Block supervisory officers are examined separately, however, certain differences emerge. Whereas 63 per cent of regional officers report having been hired to their current position from outside, only 31 per cent of Mowat Block officers so report. On average, regional office supervisory officers had only 4 years experience in another ministry position prior to their current one, and almost half (48 per cent) had no experience in another ministry position at all. Mowat Block officers, on the other hand, had an average of 6 years experience in other positions, and only a third (34 per cent) had no such prior experience. The impression given is that Mowat Block officers are more likely to work on successive specific assignments, and regional officers are more likely to remain in their more generalist positions.

Experience statistics show an interesting phenomenon similar to one observed in boards. The largest concentrations of ministry officers are those with less than five years' employment in the ministry: 41 per cent of the officers in the Mowat Block and 48 per cent of those in regional offices. The next largest concentration occurs among officers with 16 to 20 years' employment in the ministry: 37 per cent in the Mowat Block and 36 per cent in the regional offices. These data suggest that there has been substantial new hiring in recent years, either as result of expansion or retirements, and that with many officers apparently nearing retirement, the trend may continue.

It was observed in Chapter 7 that experience outside of education does not seem to count for much in the selection of supervisory officers. This was also the case with ministry officers. Ministry officers rated as essential the same kinds of background experience as did board officers. The kind most consistently rated essential was teaching, considered vital by 82 per cent of ministry officers who completed the pre-interview questionnaire. The next most important category is administrative experience, rated essential by 55 per cent of ministry officers. Their response contrasts with that of board officers, 79 per cent of whom rated administrative experience essential. Chapter 5 observed that ministry officers are much less likely to have been school administrators than their board colleagues, and much more likely to have a staff-oriented background. This probably accounts for the lower rating of administrative experience. One would expect, however, that the corollary would be higher rating for staff experience from ministry officers. In fact, only 15 per cent rated staff experience as essential, a response similar to that of board officers. Very few ministry officers (9 per cent) thought business experience was essential.

11.3.1.2. Inferred selection criteria

Respondents were asked why they thought they were appointed to their present positions and what advantages they had in applying for the job. Their perceptions obviously do not provide a systematic explanation of selection criteria. They do, however, provide a measure of the criteria they consider most important in the selection of supervisory officers by the ministry. The eleven selection criteria themes identified in Chapter 7 recurred in the responses of ministry officers although the relative importance differed. These themes are discussed below:

1. Source of experience. Although this was a very important factor for board officers who were mostly hired from within, it was not important for ministry officers. Only two mentioned that specific experience within the ministry was helpful in their selection.

2. Scope of experience was a more important factor for appointment to the ministry, as perceived by incumbents. Approximately one in four felt that diversity of experience was helpful. Specific responses referred to "... broad experience in the board of education", "... a variety of experiences outside of education", and "... experience teaching in many different situations." This criterion seems to have been perceived as somewhat more important by ministry officers than by their board colleagues.

3. Track record was referred to by approximately one in every five ministry officers. As with board officers, teaching success was not mentioned often, but success as a principal was more commonly cited. Ministry officers mentioned other types of success as well:

   "I had good visibility in the region"

   "I had demonstrated ability in a ministry project"

   "I had a provincial profile and good credibility"

   "I had a good reputation in the region."

4. Skills, competencies, and knowledge were most frequently referred to by ministry officers as an important selection criterion. More than half of the ministry respondents referred to the importance of specific knowledge. In many cases subject knowledge was seen as vital for a position. Many supervisory officers felt that a working familiarity with French was important, often in addition to other specific subject knowledge. In addition, respondents mentioned other types of skill which they felt were useful to them:

   "interpersonal skills"

   "adaptability"

   "problem-solving and writing"

   "being a good civil servant"

   "familiarity with the problems of the region."

   Human relations and administrative skills were not mentioned as often by ministry officers as by board officers, but subject-related skills were more consistently mentioned by ministry officers. This seems consistent with earlier findings that ministry positions tend to be staff-oriented.

5. Educational qualifications were not often cited as a selection criterion. Of those who did mention them, most spoke of being generally "well qualified", implying that a basic level of qualification is assumed to be necessary. Only one respondent mentioned a specific qualification, a doctorate in a particular area, as having been a really important selection criterion. The response implies that this qualification was over and above the expected level and therefore gave the candidate an advantage.

6. While organizational fit was a fairly common criterion mentioned by board officers, only one ministry officer thought that suitability for work within a specific group was important.

However, there is a considerable overlap here with the fourth theme; the match between specific skills/experiences and current ministry needs was the most frequently mentioned criterion. Thus, although fit within the ministry as an organization is not apparently important, matching skills and knowledge to current ministry needs certainly is.

7. Personal goals were hardly ever mentioned in reflecting on criteria for appointment. One ministry officer felt that his "... strong work ethic" was valuable, and another felt that his "... strong interest in schools" made a difference, but a supervisory officer's personal goals for education do not seem any more important for ministry officers than they did for board officers.

8. Gender. Among the few women board officers interviewed, some said that, all other factors being equal, being female probably helped them to be appointed. The proportion of women officers is higher in the ministry (see Chapter 5). Several of the women interviewed felt that being female had been particularly helpful in their appointment. For example, one officer declared, "They needed a woman with secondary administrative experience."

9. Political support was frequently mentioned by board officers as useful in their appointment. Indeed, some complained that political support sometimes leads to unfair selection. The same does not seem true of the ministry. Only three respondents referred to this type of support:

> "I had an interpersonal network."
>
> "I knew people in the Mowat Block."
>
> "The position was created for me."

Clearly, political influence is not perceived as common in ministry appointments.

10. Lack of competition. A few board officers declared that there were no other candidates for the job. Slightly more ministry officers declared this to be so. Some attributed lack of competition to the salary, and others to the unattractiveness of the job itself – "... it was not considered a plum job."

and

11. Administrative re-organization as a default criterion was sometimes a factor among board officers. Only three ministry officers seem to fit this category. Of these, one was an inspector who stayed with the ministry after consolidation in 1969. Another officer reported having been moved to a regional office from the Mowat Block "... to defuse a battle" between the two. Organizational factors do not seem very important in ministry appointments. On the other hand, re-organization also frequently results from new legislation or policy changes, creating new entry points for appointments to specific assignments. This factor overlaps with the fourth one, in that most ministry officers were appointed because they possessed skills required to meet ministry needs created by new legislation or policy.

11.3.1.3. Ministry selection processes

Respondents were asked to comment on the two selection processes under consideration: selection for supervisory officer certification and selection for a post in the ministry. Hardly any respondents felt that the current procedures for hiring in the ministry need to be improved. A few suggested that positions could be more widely advertised, such that newspapers with provincial readership carried the advertisements as a matter of course. Some suggested that the search for candidates could be more aggressive in an attempt to attract out the best people. Although ministry officers do not see a need to improve the hiring processes, many expressed a concern that ministry jobs are not attractive enough to ensure that the best candidates apply. The most commonly mentioned factor was salary: ministry salaries are sometimes below board salaries. Another factor mentioned occasionally was the job itself. Some ministry officers expressed the opinion, also expressed by board officers, that a secondary school principal might find the loss of vacation time and the salary differential of a ministry position quite discouraging.

The route to certification was as consistently criticized by ministry officers as it was by board officers. Although some feel that the current system is appropriate, the majority did not. Most ministry officers felt that a thorough knowledge of relevant statutory material is absolutely vital, and if the written examination were to be eliminated, command of this knowledge would have to be ensured in some other way. Many officers expressed concerns about the oral examination, in particular the consistency from one panel to the next, and the lack of clarity regarding purpose and criteria. Many ministry officers suggested that a specialized training course for supervisory officers would be much better than the current system. (One commented especially on the illogicality of having ".. for principals a course and no examination, for supervisory officers an examination but no course!".) Many also felt that a supervised job experience program would serve as a better means of assessing a candidate's suitability.

Most ministry supervisory officers were firm in their opinion that all ministry officers should hold the supervisory officer certificate. The most commonly stated reasons were that it ensures a sound knowledge of statutory material and ensures credibility in the field. Not one respondent attempted to justify the expectations of the certification process on the basis of the job requirements or potential for successful performance. Support was often based on:

"It was a good learning experience."

"I went through it and so should everybody else."

"We must have a provincial control system."

While it is clear that the certification process as a "rite of passage" might be justifiable, especially in positions where credibility in the field might otherwise be reduced, the time may now be appropriate for a reconsideration of this as a general requirement. Indeed, many ministry officers suggest that the supervisory officer certification requirement is redundant in many ministry positions, and may even hinder the hiring of the most appropriate individuals. The suggestion was made that the ministry could consider adopting a differentiated model, wherein jobs demanding certain technical skills would not require certification, but jobs of a general supervisory nature would. The former category might well be filled through teacher secondments. This suggestion is reminiscent of one made earlier in response to the question of future changes in the role of the supervisory officer in the ministry.

11.3.2. Training

11.3.2.1. Numerical analysis

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of different types of training. The most highly rated "essential" training (82 per cent) was teacher training. As we did with board officers, we can probably infer that it is not teacher training so much as teacher certification and experience which is important. The message is quite clear from both ministry and board officers: a supervisory officer must usually have been a teacher.

The second most highly rated "essential" training (62 per cent) was specialized supervisory officer training – despite the unavailability of such training on a systematic basis across the province. It is not clear to what training or experience these officers were referring. Responses to questions relating to their own background and professional development report little training prior to appointment, but several reported valuable inservice experiences.

Ministry officers did not rate principal training as highly as did board officers: only 42 per cent thought that this was essential, compared with 66 per cent of board officers. This finding seems consistent

with the earlier one that many ministry officers are less line-oriented than board colleagues. However, the ministry officers also rated graduate work as less essential than did their board colleagues (45 per cent compared with 60 per cent).

The greater proportion of ministry officers (45 per cent) had mainly secondary school experience. Less than a third (27 per cent) had mostly elementary school experience. This is almost exactly the reverse of the situation in boards, where more supervisory officers had elementary backgrounds.

11.3.2.2. Relevant preparation

Among board officers, the most commonly mentioned relevant training for the job, in their own case, was graduate work. Similarly, the majority of ministry officers said the most relevant training they had was graduate work. Those who hold doctorates often mentioned the special relevance of that training, particularly where the focus of study matched current assignments. A number of ministry officers mentioned the relevance of certain non-degree courses taken through universities, courses which matched a current assignment. Many of these courses are so specific in nature that they would be useful to only a small group of supervisory officers, but some are very general, such as "Managerial training" or "Leadership skills".

Although ministry officers mentioned very few different types of relevant training in their own backgrounds, they did many different types of experience as especially relevant preparatory learning. In order of frequency of mention the most common types were as follows:

- administrative experience
- teaching experience
- staff experience
- ministry experience
- teacher federation experience
- experience outside education

This list is not dissimilar to the list of clusters identified for board officers (Chapter 7). Ministry officers mentioned the same broad preparatory experiences – professional interaction, people management, mentoring and so on – but they also usually gave a specific locus for this experience. Thus, some ministry officers referred to experience in teacher federations as useful in providing experience in taking extra responsibility or managing people. Some referred to experience in the ministry as useful for learning how government works or learning from a mentor. Indeed, among ministry officers, mentors were almost invariably ministry people rather than board people. Thus, although ministry officers describe much the same background experience, there was a more consistent focus on the workings of the ministry than education in general.

Another noticeable difference is that board officers hardly ever mentioned staff experience, but quite a few ministry officers cited this as particularly relevant to them. This is again consistent with the emerging picture of many ministry officers as being staff-oriented in both work and outlook.

As with board officers, ministry officers stressed breadth of experience as very important. A wide variety of experiences inside and outside education are seen as providing opportunity to learn many skills which will be valuable later.

11.3.2.3. Gaps in preparation

Ministry officers reported gaps in preparation which cluster in the same way as did the responses of board officers: (1) new areas of responsibility; (2) increased magnitude of responsibility; and (3) basic management skills. Many ministry officers reported that they were unprepared for their jobs only in that they had to master the specific bodies of technical knowledge with which they would be working. Most did not see this as a problem; they had the requisite skills and sufficient background knowledge to be able to master the specifics quite easily. Some even saw this as a challenge, and one saw it as the job's major attraction. A number of ministry officers said that they were unprepared for the bureaucratic and political structure of the ministry: "I didn't realize that I wouldn't have a personality any more." A few said that they were not very good at writing at first, but had found this to be vital in the job.

Magnitude of responsibility posed less of a problem for ministry officers as for board officers, but some did say that they were not really prepared for the breadth of responsibility in the job. One stated this as a problem arising from the inter-related structure of the ministry:

> "I was not prepared for the amount of work that comes and for the responsibility that was mine. If I didn't deal with things, other people were held up."

Very few ministry officers mentioned a gap in management skills. Although almost half of the ministry officers declared when asked in the interview that there were aspects of the job they were not prepared for, not many of them seemed to feel that this was a very serious, or even avoidable, problem.

The clearest dissatisfactions existed in the regional offices concerning communication and involvement in policy, whether in the form of input to policy formulation, or in terms of discussing and understanding policy decisions. There is a distinct sense of alienation from the decision-making and the (two-way) communication process among many supervisory officers in the regional offices.

The question of involvement and understanding of decisions and policy among Mowat Block supervisory officers was not quite so clear. Several Mowat Block respondents talked about the complexity of arriving at decisions in the political atmosphere of the Mowat Block. One respondent said that the greatest difficulty is trying to second guess the political will of the government on certain issues, so that relevant responses (whether in support or with qualification) could be prepared.

11.3.2.4. Useful professional development

Responses to questions about professional development generally concentrated on content and method. A number of ministry officers, in common with board officers, said that they would like more professional development in leadership skills in general. In particular, they talked about personnel management, motivation, and implementation strategies. The second most common cluster of responses related to the need for a broader understanding of ministry policies and procedures and regular updates on changes and trends. This seems to correspond to the need for professional development in "current educational directions and trends", a cluster identified for board officers (Chapter 7); ministry officers, however, were more likely to refer specifically to ministry directions and trends. A few ministry officers were particularly interested in learning more about the law in relation to education, a few wanted to learn more about a specific topic (such as computers in education), and a few wanted to improve their writing skills. This cluster seems similar to the "practical problems and issues" cluster identified for board officers. Thus, although specifics may differ according to location or assignment, the areas of need for professional development content expressed by ministry officers are substantially the same as those identified by board officers:

- Leadership skills and human relations
- Practical problems and issues
- Current policy directions and trends

In the case of ministry officers, these clusters appear to correspond somewhat with the gaps in preparation discussed above.

As did board officers, ministry officers tended to place more emphasis on personal contact and interactive methods of professional development than on more traditional approaches. A few thought that short courses would be useful, but many more would prefer workshops, opportunities for exchange assignments, or release time to explore alternatives. The most commonly mentioned preference was for any method which would allow extensive and productive contact with colleagues near and far. Indeed, this was the aspect most commonly cited as useful in any form of professional development. Like board officers, ministry officers value peer interaction and practical experiences over listening to lectures.

Two issues raised with regard to board officer professional development also apply to ministry officers. First, many commented on the lack of time for professional development and the difficulty of organizing the work flow to create pockets of professional development time. Second, there does not appear to be a systematic professional development plan for supervisory officers and few seem to have given much thought to making a plan of their own. One ministry officer said "The opportunities are there but I haven't taken them." Further discussion suggested that his problem lay in his inability to organize his work schedule to avail himself of opportunities provided by the ministry. Several officers said that the ministry provides more opportunities than do school boards. Clearly, those would be much more effective if they formed part of a coordinated plan to help supervisory officers organize their time and map their own professional development.

11.3.3. Performance appraisal

This process is presently under review in the ministry. Current practice varies from detailed job expectations with systematic feedback to a process best characterized as "good intentions". Since the process is under review, any statements made may well be obsolete before publication. However, there is some value in looking at what ministry officers themselves perceive to be indicators of their effectiveness.

Respondents in the ministry mentioned four major sources of feedback on their effectiveness:

1. Informal feedback from colleagues;
2. Informal feedback from the field;
3. Informal feedback from superiors;
4. Formal review.

Many officers complained that there was too little feedback of any kind, and very few thought that formal methods were of any use as they currently stand. Only seven respondents said that the formal performance appraisal was useful. Many more said that it was not. Some dismissed it completely:

"There is no performance appraisal. We attempted one, two years ago, but it was no good."

Opinions regarding performance appraisal did not correlate with type of assignment or location.

The most important informal feedback appears to come from colleagues and from the field. Approximately half of all ministry respondents mentioned both of these sources as very important. Many

reported that the most reliable indicator of effectiveness was being approached by colleagues for specific and obviously needed consultation and help. The same was true of informal feedback from superiors sometimes it takes the form of positive comments, and sometimes just being asked to do another job for someone indicates that a previous task was effectively handled.

Several ministry officers, like board officers, said that they were aware of being effective when initiatives and projects work out successfully. This comment was usually attached to a statement that there really was no other indicator of effectiveness available. Many felt that there is a need for more clarity in appraisal of performance. The development of an effective performance appraisal process which provides clear expectations, regular feedback, and tangible merit recognition would be of benefit.

11.4. Satisfaction and stress

11.4.1. Satisfiers

Respondents in the ministry were asked to describe what aspects of the job are most satisfying. Responses clustered into three general categories of more or less equal importance, each mentioned by at least half of the sample:

1. influencing the quality of education and being of service to education;
2. seeing a particular project for which I had major responsibility work out successfully;
3. the working environment and conditions.

Many ministry officers derive satisfaction from feeling that they were able to have an effect on education in the province. They perceived this impact through instances where they have been able to convince a ministry committee or a board to take a particular approach, where they have been able to answer a question or request accurately and helpfully, or where they have been able to defuse or resolve conflicts. This feeling of being both useful and influential is common to many of the examples of satisfying experiences given.

Like board officers, many ministry officers derived much of their satisfaction from seeing a pet project through to completion. Closure seems to be more important than credit, for very often credit goes elsewhere. Satisfaction seems to come from seeing the thing through to its end and knowing that it is good. This awareness of value relates strongly to the first cluster of satisfiers.

Approximately half of all ministry respondents said that they derive much satisfaction from some aspect of the working environment. Most commonly it is the pleasure of working with colleagues, both in the office and in the field, who are perceived to be both compatible and expert. Some officers value the variety and scope afforded by their jobs and some value the independence, both factors which are regarded as rewards of the job.

Board officers reported more numerous and more varied satisfiers than did ministry officers, but the difference in sample sizes may account for this. Nonetheless, certain satisfiers are noticeably different. Ministry officers did not mention school visiting, probably because they do very little. They also did not mention satisfaction from a smooth running system or keeping the system solvent, both of which also seem to be logical omissions. Board and ministry officers both mentioned influence and impact as satisfiers, but board officers were more likely to see these as related to power than were ministry officers.

11.4.2. Dissatisfiers

Like board respondents, ministry respondents were most often dissatisfied with the political nature of their working environment. Approximately half of the ministry respondents complained of the political vicissitudes of the job. The most common complaints were about the "red tape" which hinders efficiency and delays decisions ("The slowness of decisions here drives me nuts!"), and about the apparently arbitrary nature of some decisions. Letters were frequently mentioned as a source of frustration. After spending inordinate amounts of time drafting a letter, an officer might find that it must be changed for no adequately explained editorial reason, changed completely because policy has shifted, or scrapped because "...that issue has died during the delay". The frustration of wasted time and energy is strongly felt in such cases. Changes in policy are themselves a source of irritation: some officers feel annoyed that policy changes are often not properly communicated to them, with the results they are placed in awkward positions. A few officers felt that they were not appreciated by their superiors, but this seems to be random organizational noise rather than a consistent problem.

Most other dissatisfiers seem to relate to working conditions. About one in every seven ministry respondents complained of a general overload of work, and a similar proportion complained of wasting too much time on clerical work because there is insufficient support available. Three officers complained that their salary was inadequate.

A small number of supervisory officers in regional offices complained that it is sometimes difficult to cope with the conflict between ministry policy and local conditions: "People here will not accept Toronto policy."

These dissatisfiers parallel closely those identified by board officers, although the context differs. Doing their jobs within their respective political arenas is frustrating to both board and ministry officers. Members of both groups also complained of overload. Board officers complained about the administrative structure of the system, and ministry officers about red tape.

11.4.3. Rewards

The rewards of the job mentioned by ministry respondents were very similar to the satisfiers, indicating that the short- and long-term satisfactions of the job are closely linked. The most common reward was expressed as the feeling of being useful and influential. Another major reward related to the opportunity and experience in obtaining a broader (provincial) system perspective. Related to this was the opportunity to become aware of policy trends and developments in the province. Many ministry respondents declared that the job itself is intrinsically rewarding: it is challenging, diverse, and interesting. Some valued the flexibility and independence of the job highly. Relationships with other people in the course of work are also cited as rewarding.

Personal recognition did not rate highly with ministry respondents. Only a few officers said that they were rewarded by personal recognition. In some circumstances, as described in several interviews, the officer may actually do most of the work on a project for which someone else takes credit, but is nonetheless able to experience personal gratification. This may be a useful talent among ministry officers if recognition is so infrequently mentioned as a reward!

Only two officers said that the salary was rewarding. One was a teacher prior to appointment and thus the salary differential was significant. The other looked at the salary as a means to a good life style without comparing it to comparable salaries elsewhere.

11.4.4. Costs

Ministry officers did not identify as many costs associated with the job as did board officers. Whereas board officers overwhelmingly reported that the demands of the job imposed serious restrictions on family life, personal life, community activities and health, less than half of the ministry officers reported this. Indeed, a number of ministry officers said that they were under much less restriction of this kind than when they were working for a board. Many officers did say that the demands of the job interfered with personal and family activities, but the problem is not so widespread as it appears to be in boards.

The next most common costs relate to financial and holiday benefits. Quite a few ministry officers complained that they took cuts in both salary and vacation when they moved to the ministry, or that they compare poorly on both counts in comparison with colleagues in boards. Interestingly, the majority of those expressing discontent with benefits were regional officers, who work regularly with board officers and hence are aware of these discrepancies. The comparison is probably exacerbated by the similarity between board and regional office jobs, and by the differential between Mowat Block and regional office salaries. Regional officers sometimes feel like poor relations in comparison with both sets of colleagues.

As a general inference from the data, apart from salary, ministry respondents seem happier in their work than do board respondents. They reported fewer costs and fewer dissatisfiers. They also, as the next section will show, tend to experience less stress in the job.

11.4.5. Stress profiles

Ministry stress scores were analysed in the same way as board supervisory officer stress scores. Table 11-1 shows the rank-ordered scores recorded by ministry officers in our sample. The highest source of stress among ministry officers was inter-role distance. This subscale refers to the problems faced when the demands of the working role make it impossible to spend sufficient time in family and personal activities. Board supervisory officers also ranked this type of stress highest, and higher in fact than did ministry officers. (This validates the analysis of interview discussions about costs of the job.)

The second highest source of stress relates to resource allocation and the difficulties individuals experience in obtaining the financial, human, and material resources they feel they need to be able to work well. Board supervisory officers do not generally see this as quite such a great source of stress.

The third highest ranked source of stress is role overload, which is the same as the work overload mentioned earlier as a dissatisfying aspect of the job. Board officers ranked this higher than ministry officers did. The fourth highest ranked source of stress is role isolation, related to the lack of communication and consultation between supervisory officers. Role isolation was seen as particularly stressful for officers in large boards and in hierarchically structured boards. On this subject, ministry officers on average indicate levels of stress very similar to the average for board officers. This finding suggests that the size and hierarchical structure of the Ministry of Education may be somewhat tempered by the physical proximity of officers.

Role erosion ranked slightly higher for ministry officers than it did for board officers, perhaps reflecting the changing relationship between ministry and boards. Some ministry officers may see the trend away from an inspectorial role as an erosion. The role expectation subscale refers to problems which relate to conflicting demands from different sectors. ministry officers on average did not report suffering from this kind of stress quite as much as their board colleagues. However, regional office supervisory

Table 11-1: Ministry Supervisory Officers: Rank-Ordered Stress Subscale Scores

	Mean*	SD
Inter-role distance	11.4	4.2
Resource	10.8	3.5
Role overload	10.5	4.0
Role isolation	9.5	3.1
Role erosion	8.7	2.9
Role stagnation	8.6	3.1
Self-role conflict	8.4	2.9
Role expectation	8.3	2.9
Role ambiguity	7.9	2.9
Personal inadequacy	7.7	2.4

*Each scale has a range of possible scores from 5 to 25. The overall total, therefore, has a range of 50 to 250.

officers were more likely to rate this type of stress a little higher. This is quite consistent with earlier findings about the sometimes uncomfortable position of the regional officer.

Ministry officers did not record such high levels of overall stress as did board officers. Their most significant sources of stress, were the interference of work overload with personal and family life, and the inadequacy of resources with which to perform their duties.

11.5. What skills are necessary?

Supervisory officers were asked what skills are really necessary in their jobs: what do they really have to be good at? Responses from ministry officers clustered in a pattern similar to that for board officers (see Chapter 9). The clusters, in alphabetical order, are as follows:

- Communications
- Conceptual Ability
- Human Relations
- Knowledge
- Management / Leadership
- Patience
- Political Astuteness
- Self-confidence

The clusters of Planning/Analysis/Judgement and Vision drawn from board responses are very similar to the cluster of Conceptual Ability drawn from ministry responses. There is a slight difference in that ministry respondents tend to place more emphasis on actual cognitive ability. Integrity did not appear as a cluster in ministry responses, having been mentioned only once. Where board officers rated persistence and stamina highly, ministry officers were more likely to stress the quality of patience as important, a quality referred to by some respondents as "thick skin". Thus the clusters are similar to those identified for board officers, with slight differences of emphasis. Each cluster is briefly discussed below.

Cross cutting many of the skills was the notion of credibility. More than anything else respondents emphasized that a ministry supervisory officer must have and/or establish credibility with school board supervisory officers.

Ministry respondents almost invariably rated writing ability as a vital communication skill. It encompasses many different kinds of writing, all of them important to the job. Many also say that oral communication is vital; a ministry officer must be able to speak clearly and authoritatively on short notice. The ministry officer must be able to communicate ministry policy clearly to audiences ranging from the informed public to policy developers, practitioners and scholars. Officers must be able to prepare correspondence, draft legislation, supervise guideline preparation, and document a wide variety of committee responses and positions for internal and public circulation, to the degree demanded by the current assignment. As one respondent put it:

> "Ministry people must be able to present an accurate and confident personal image on demand, from an informal conversation at the market on Saturday morning to a carefully prepared position delivered under the tension of a confrontational board meeting".

Ministry officers referred to the skills necessary for "...understanding things clearly, quickly" and "...learning new things fast." One summarized the point as "You have to be really smart!" This general conceptual ability also means being able to analyse critically and comprehend a broad picture of interrelated events.

Human relations skills include the capacity to work well with others. ministry officers were less concerned with getting the best out of individuals and more with getting the best out of a group through effective human interaction. They were also concerned with public relations – representing the ministry accurately and appropriately with a minimum of conflict. This cluster includes the ability to mediate or negotiate well to resolve or avoid conflict.

Knowledge is vital to ministry officers. They must have information at their fingertips. As one officer said, "You lose credibility if you have to keep calling people back with answers." Basic to positions in the ministry is a thorough knowledge of the Education Act and Regulations for Ontario. From interview data, it is also assumed that a broad base of knowledge of program initiatives and innovations, relevant research literature, and general trends at provincial, national and international levels is important.

Management subsumes the organizational skills necessary to manage time, work flow, and groups of people effectively. Like board officers, ministry officers see this as something of a juggling act within their working schedules.

Patience is the skill necessary to an officer who must take criticism on behalf of the ministry and respond appropriately regardless of personal opinion. Board officers also mentioned the need for "infinite patience", but for them the skill tended to be related to dogged persistence and sheer physical stamina. For ministry officers, it was more often the ability to listen calmly to undeserved criticism and to subordinate personal feelings to the demands of the role. In the words of one respondent, "The ministry is not a place for hot heads! You must have a thick skin, a sense of humour, and patience."

Political astuteness is the same skill as was identified by board respondents. The emphasis differs somewhat in that ministry officers were less concerned with handling trustees than with handling board supervisory officers and their own political masters in the ministry. They were also not so much concerned with persuading others to see their point of view as they were with reading the political climate accurately so as to behave appropriately.

Self-confidence is closely related to the "thick skin" mentioned earlier. A strong sense of self is important in a job where reinforcement is limited and criticisms come from many directions.

The main difference between the Mowat Block and regional offices is that in general the former must have greater skills in policy analysis and policy development. In Chapter 9 the skill clusters were divided into process skills and qualities. The skill clusters identified from ministry responses divide as follows when the same analysis is used:

1. **Process Skills**
    - Human Relations
    - Communications
    - Management/Leadership
    - Political Astuteness
2. **Qualities**
    - Conceptual Ability
    - Patience
    - Knowledge
    - Self-confidence

The two groups obviously overlap somewhat, as do the items within them. As observed in Chapter 9, the items form an inseparable package.

The closing paragraphs of Chapter 9 note that responses relating to skills tended to exhibit certain characteristics. These characteristics hold true, by and large, for ministry responses as well. First, the same themes recur; respondents generally talk about the same types of skills. Second, there is a vagueness in the way skills are identified and labels are inconsistent; there is a lack of common understanding. Third, the amalgam of skills and qualities defined is extremely complex and not always entirely compatible. Fourth, there is some doubt that the responses taken together form a coherent framework. Fifth is the concern that the common core of skills applies differentially in different roles, but without a systematic model to guide appropriate application. Such a model is probably even more important in the ministry where the data indicate that many assignments are extremely specific. An assignment might be so specific that only a small subset of skills is vital at any one time, and the match between these skills and those of the incumbent is so important that there is virtually no margin for error.

11.6. Summary and implications

11.6.1. Summary

Throughout this chapter we have attempted to highlight the differences between ministry and board supervisory officers that seem indicated by our analysis of the data. These can be summarized as follows:

- It may be misleading to group all ministry appointees together. Those working in regional offices have different responsibilities from those working in the Mowat Block. Within the Mowat Block there seem to be two types of appointments: general supervisory appointments and curricular specialist appointments (with some overlap between the two types).
- Ministry officers, whatever their assignments, work in a broader context than board officers, seeing the provincial or regional rather than the local scope of things.
- Regional officers are more like board officers in their actual roles, but work at a very difficult interface between local and provincial levels.

- Mowat Block officers are more likely to be assigned to very tightly focused and specific activities for limited periods of time.
- Mowat Block officers tend to spend much of their time interacting primarily with one another.
- Ministry officers do not work as many evenings as do board officers.
- Board officers are more likely to consider administrative experience as essential in the preparation of a supervisory officer.
- Ministry jobs are not considered as attractive as board jobs.
- Ministry officers rate staff experience prior to appointment more highly than do board officers.
- Ministry officers do not see themselves as having the same degree of autonomy or authority as do board officers.
- Ministry officers do not expect or receive the same level of personal recognition in the community at large as do board officers.
- Differences in salaries between board and ministry and between Mowat Block and regional offices are a source of extreme dissatisfaction.
- Patience seems to be a more valued skill among ministry officers than board officers.
- On the whole ministry officers, especially in the Mowat Block, seem to be happier with their lot than are board officers.

During the interviews, ministry officers were asked what they perceived to be the differences between ministry and board positions. Their responses confirm all of the above points. Further, ministry respondents perceived that they are "...yet another step removed from schools and kids". Quite a few board officers saw this as a cost of the job, but only one ministry officer did.

11.6.2. Implications

1. Although overlapping is inevitable, there appear to be three general types of ministerial job. Regional office superintendents and education officers tend to perform a supervisory and administrative role. In the Mowat Block some people work intensively on planning, development, and coordination tasks while others have broader administrative and supervisory responsibilities. Although these roles have been demonstrated to have the same basic functions and use the same core skills as any other supervisory officer positions, there is some need to consider what different preparatory experiences might be appropriate.
2. Regional officers seem to have some genuine concerns about centralization and some genuine feelings of alienation from the Mowat Block. To some extent this is probably inevitable. Since it seems generally agreed that the regional offices provide invaluable and indispensable services, however, it would be advantageous to consider ways to improve the working relationship between the Mowat Block and the regional offices. In addition, the difficulties inherent in working at the interface between ministry and local boards need to be better understood and alleviated.
3. The question of whether ministerial staff officers should hold supervisory officer certification is a much more complicated one than it first appears. There seems to be every reason to expect that some individuals should have this qualification, but for others it seems to be extraneous to the position and may create an unnecessary barrier to otherwise highly qualified candidates.
4. There is a problem with communications inside the ministry and between ministerial offices. The letter-writing procedures in particular are seen to be inefficient, to the point where they sometimes engender resentment. Communications between the Mowat Block and the regional offices are not always satisfactory and have the same potential for misunderstandings. Any improvements in communications, both between levels of management and between people at the same level, would probably have far-reaching benefits.

5. There is apparently a core of basic skills common to all supervisory personnel. Its existence suggests that a common preparatory route might be suitable. Substantial differences are evident, however, in the context in which the skills are employed, in the emphasis placed on particular skills, and in the kind of knowledge required. The question of preparation is more complex than it appears: any new system of preparation should have sufficient flexibility to take into account the type of position and the specific skills required of the incumbent.

6. Despite the inception of the OAEAO Internship program, OCLEA initiatives, and local/regional professional development offerings, there is an alarming lack of opportunities for professional growth for Ontario supervisory officers. Equally alarming is the lack of a perceived need for a coherent program. The public professional development policy for senior Ontario educators pales in comparison with requirements and opportunities frequently found in the private sector, and even in other sectors of the same profession. One Mowat Block respondent expressed this point: "If it is necessary for teachers to remain current through A.Q. (additional qualification) courses a case can be made for supervisory officers to remain equally current, to recognize quality performance, stimulate vision and provide leadership." Finally, one of the greatest values in working for the ministry is the opportunity and experience which it provides for gaining *perspective* beyond one's own board. As we have noted before, narrowness of experience, exposure to board educational political and societal issues are major limitations in the career patterns of many supervisory officers in boards.

PART D: RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 12
The Supervisory Officer: A New Look

The present study had both empirical and policy aims. The empirical aims, to increase and clarify knowledge about the supervisory officer role in school boards and the Ministry of Education, were the subject of Part B and Part C of the report. At the end of each chapter, we attempted to draw out the implications of the findings and foreshadow changes which might be considered. In terms of the policy, the aim was to determine the need for change in existing policy and legislation, particularly with regard to the preparation and certification of supervisory officers in Ontario.

Generally, while we found a good deal of satisfaction and sense of accomplishment on the part of Ontario's supervisory officers, we identified a number of fundamental problems. For example, many of the skills that supervisory officers considered vital were ones that they were unlikely to be exposed to in any systematic or developmental fashion. The career path followed by the majority of supervisory officers was marked by a high degree of uniformity and by narrowness of experience. Supervisory officers were frustrated by the heavy demands of the role, and by the difficulty of finding time and opportunity for professional development. The current certification system did not appear to be conducive to identifying and promoting the range of educational leaders needed. Rather than encouraging improvement, working conditions often constrained supervisory officers from becoming as effective as they might be.

On the basis of the data from all components of the study, we identified a range of needs to be addressed. Our recommendations are designed to attain the following objectives:

- to foster the identification and development of candidates with strong potential for leadership, and to encourage their promotion to the position of supervisory officer;
- to introduce a more systematic approach to developing and assessing candidate skills applicable to effective job performance;
- to stimulate proposals for innovative professional growth opportunities, including provision of a greater variety of leadership training and experiences both within and outside the education system;
- to combat the narrowness of experience evident in the current system,
- to introduce a system of constructive job performance feedback;
- to establish a system of peer review of all aspects of the supervisory officer licensing process.

The recommendations are organized under the following headings: Certification; Professional Development and Professional Activities; Role Clarification; Performance Appraisal; Ministry of Education; and Other Issues.

12.1. Certification

Our interview data indicate that the province's supervisory officers believe Ontario should maintain a provincially controlled certification process for senior leadership candidates in education. However, it is clear from the findings and discussions in Chapters 6-10 that the present system of certification is not appropriate for the selection and preparation of supervisory officers for the complex demands of the role over the next ten to fifteen years. Specifically, it does not provide or require the kinds of preservice and on-the-job training and experiences necessary, nor is it conducive to the early identification, development, certification and selection of a wide range of potentially effective leaders. Rather than proposing improvements to the present structure, we are therefore recommending a new process attuned to the requirements we have identified. Thus we recommend:

Recommendation 1: That the current certification system be discontinued, and replaced with a system as outlined in the remaining recommendations.

The certification recommendations are given below, then elaborated in the text following.

The educational community supports provincial control of any licensing or certification process. To maintain such support and to provide a mechanism for establishing and monitoring an effective system for development of leadership among supervisory officers, we recommend:

Recommendation 2: That there be formed The Council of Ontario Education Officers (The Council).

Recommendation 3: That the responsibilities of The Council be as follows: to develop, administer and monitor procedures for selection, licensing, (and delicensing), training, and professional development of Ontario supervisory officers.

The Council will oversee all the procedures outlined in later recommendations which set the framework within which supervisory officers develop their careers. In particular The Council will approve programs, assess qualifications, and maintain records relative to the various components of Recommendation 5. An important aspect of this function will be to develop communication between school boards and the Ministry of Education to ensure quality and consistency across the province. The Council would also provide aid and support to small boards in the development of supervisory officers and act as liaison between all interested parties.

Recommendation 4: That a planning group be created to develop specific terms of reference, structure, and a time-line for the formation of The Council, and to determine its membership. The planning group would include representatives of the Ministry of Education, supervisory officers, Ontario school trustees, and the Ontario Teachers' Federation.

In recommending the establishment of The Council of Ontario Education Officers, we are emphasizing the need for an independent body to recommend licensing to the Minister of Education. Based on the data and analysis presented in this report, we believe that a new model is needed, a model which links preparation, certification, selection, and professional development in a well-articulated, coherent system. We see this system as closely related to the role itself and to the needs of Ontario school systems. We therefore recommend:

Recommendation 5: That an Ontario Supervisory Officer Licence be created to qualify candidates to serve as supervisory officers in school boards and to occupy certain positions as education officers in the Ontario Ministry of Education. The licence would be issued on a probationary or permanent basis as follows:

Recommendation 5.1: That this Licence will be issued on a probationary basis to candidates with the following qualifications:

a) an acceptable university graduate degree or equivalent (in the case of business candidates, the candidate must be an architect, certified general accountant, certified management accountant, chartered accountant, or professional engineer);

b) three years of relevant leadership experience as designated and assessed by The Council;

c) successful completion of a Council-approved examination on the Ontario Education Act and Regulations;

d) a permanent teaching certificate or equivalent educational experience as approved by The Council (for academic candidates only);

e) successful completion of an approved program of Advanced Skill Training requiring candidates to demonstrate competency in specific skill and knowledge areas. The Council will be responsible for developing guidelines, accrediting and reviewing programs;

f) an appointment as a supervisory officer either with a school board or the Ministry of Education.

Recommendation 5.2: That the Supervisory Officer Licence become permanent on successful completion of three years as a supervisory officer with an Ontario school board or with the Ministry of Education (i.e., a three-year internship). The Council will be responsible for guidelines, expectations and assessment procedures for the internship.

Having fulfilled the basic requirements in **5.1, a)** through **e)**, the candidate would be deemed to be eligible for appointment, and as such would be registered with The Council. When a candidate is first appointed to a supervisory officer position, the supervisory officer licence is awarded on a probationary basis, the candidate takes up his/her responsibilities, and the internship program begins. In order to begin an internship, a candidate must be appointed to a supervisory officer position.

During the internship the candidate is an employed supervisory officer, but the employing school board or the ministry is required to release the candidate for a minimum of twenty professional development days in each of the three years required to complete the internship. The release-time period will be used for professional growth programs.

The Chief Executive Officer of the employing board (or the appropriate director in the ministry) will recommend that The Council submit the candidate's name for a Permanent supervisory Officer Licence. The Licence is granted by the Minister of Education.

12.1.1. Elaboration of qualifications for probationary licence

To broaden the basic requirements, we have chosen not to recommend a specific graduate degree such as the M.Ed. We expect that the majority of candidates will possess this degree and M.Ed. programs that integrate theory and practice might be especially valuable. However, candidates from a variety of graduate programs (e.g., business, political science, English) would increase the range of talents, interests, and abilities among the candidates.

Three years of relevant leadership experience would encompass alternative routes such as consultancies and experience in business and industry.

The examination on the Ontario Education Act and Regulations is envisaged as straightforward and easy to administer. For this reason The Council might wish to consider making the examination scorable by machine. A fee should be levied to cover the full cost of administering the exam.

A permanent teaching certificate would normally be a requirement for academic supervisors, but equivalent educational experience could be substituted in exceptional circumstances. For business officials, the teaching certificate would not be a requirement.

A master's degree would provide theoretical preparation, while the Advanced Skill Training would focus on skill development through the integration of theory and practice, thus providing learning experiences different from those obtained in a master's program. Our recommendation is for a program of modules, workshops and other skill training sequences focusing on the skill areas identified in Chapter 9. We expect The Council to develop and regulate activities in the following areas:

- Communication (oral, written, listening)
- Human Resource Development (human relations, motivation, supervision, appraisal, development, conflict management)
- Planning, Implementing, Evaluating (strategic planning, and evaluating policy and program development and evaluation)
- Organization (delegation, time management, administrative techniques)
- Politics (political skills and coping)
- Knowledge and Trends (skills in knowledge retrieval, research knowledge utilization, trend identification, vision building)
- Finance

The Council would coordinate and approve programs developed by faculties of education, schools of business, OISE, OCLEA, industry, business organizations, community colleges, the Ministry of Education, and school boards themselves, acting either independently or in concert. The recently developed School Board Management programs for business officials would, we assume, be dealt with as Advanced Skill Training, perhaps subject to some modification. The offering of programs by a variety of non-educational as well as educational groups is designed to stimulate innovative approaches and the use of a wide range of ideas and resources for leadership training. Assessment procedures employed in Advanced Skill Training must receive approval by The Council.

Although the final decision would be made by The Council, we would suggest that:

- each module be at least 40 hours;
- the developers give a full description of the objectives of the program, qualifications of leaders, nature of the program, and means of assessing learning;
- candidates complete seven units, corresponding to the skill areas listed above. Candidates who have completed comparable skill training could apply for advanced credit for up to two of the seven units;
- units be funded through fees paid by participants and/or boards;
- successful completion of Advanced Skill Training units be assessed by program providers, and reported to The Council for purposes of validation and record keeping.

12.1.2. Internship

The early years in the job are crucial for the development of attitudes and skills. Our interviews suggest that newly appointed supervisory officers feel overwhelmed by the scope and responsibility of the role. There is a danger that the typical ad hoc on-the-job learning experience may result in a survival approach to the role. A structured internship would provide newly appointed officers with the support necessary to make on-the-job learning more productive. New supervisory officers would be given time and resources to reflect upon, integrate, and profit from their daily work experiences. Internships would encourage continued skill development, provide an opportunity for systematic performance appraisal, and promote a variety of experiences in both educational and non-educational settings.

The intern, a fully employed supervisory officer with a probationary licence, would be released for a minimum of twenty days per year. We would argue for the following features to be incorporated into the program:

- activities associated with the internship would take place outside the home board;
- some of these activities would take place in non-educational settings;
- a variety of agencies would be encouraged to develop internship proposals and programs with individual boards or on a regional basis.
- programs could be structured in a variety of ways, such as peer study groups, assignment to a mentor for individual consultation, and further use of Advanced Skill Training activities by study groups;
- advanced leadership training sessions could be developed for mentors, focusing on the development of their role and mechanisms for exchanging experiences in mentoring;
- since the internship is intended to enhance the variety of experience, one might imagine a three-year experience in which the twenty days in Year One were spent in the Ministry of Education, in Year Two in an organization outside education, and in Year Three in another school board. In each case the intern would study and work with a mentor on a variety of assignments;
- suitable performance appraisal procedures would be developed. These procedures would be used as the basis for continuous professional growth and for decisions to terminate internship if necessary. Failure to recommend permanent licensing would be subject to due process and appeal procedures.

12.2. Professional development and professional activities

Our analysis indicated that supervisory officers have great difficulty finding time to pursue serious professional development activities. Many express the need for learning opportunities which do not seem to be available, others want to avail themselves of learning experiences which are available, and many would like to spend time observing other jurisdictions. The analysis suggests that, although there is a shortage of appropriate specific activities in some areas, a further problem is that supervisory officers find it hard to get away from their duties. In addition, Ontario has no professional development plan for supervisory officers. As a result of all these factors, professional development for supervisory officers has been fragmented and inconsistent. Therefore, we recommend the following:

Recommendation 6: That The Council and provincial school boards work together to create a professional development plan for supervisory officers.

Recommendation 7: That school boards and the ministry develop long-range plans for leadership development, such plans to include leadership needs projections; recruitment strategies; provision for internal opportunities for professional growth, such as

apprenticeships, specific assignments and the like, and provision for external professional growth opportunities, such as exchanges, special assignments, study leaves, and secondments. Such plans should pay special attention to gender and minority group issues in leadership.

Recommendation 8: That incumbent supervisory officers participate in Advanced Skill Training on a voluntary basis, and that boards and the Ministry of Education facilitate this process.

The Council could stimulate these activities through the development of guidelines, prototypes, research, leadership seminars, and conferences. Short courses, seminars, briefings, etc. might be developed by The Council or by other agencies on a wide variety of topics, such as

- education in northern Ontario
- policy making in the Ontario Ministry of Education
- alternative structures for small (large) school boards
- new initiatives: early primary education, heritage language, software evaluations, health education, etc.

In addition, we emphasize the need for a large-scale program of secondments in order to stimulate more intensive and varied learning experiences for supervisory officers. Secondments should occur between the ministry and boards, among different boards, and between boards and other agencies.

The development of imaginative and stimulating long-range leadership plans is critical for the 1990s, because of the probable impending shortage of leadership. Demographic trends are such that many boards will be experiencing high retirement rates over the next five years. Such retirements, together with the perceived unattractive features of the job (as discussed in earlier chapters) could result in a severe shortage of leaders at the supervisory officer level.

12.3. Role clarification

Interviews indicated some conflict and confusion in regard to the roles of trustees and supervisory officers, and the relationship between them. In addition, supervisory officers spend a significant amount of time in tasks which do not require their expertise and could be adequately handled by professional assistants (such as drafting correspondence, making telephone calls, and routine reporting). We therefore recommend:

Recommendation 9: That the relative roles of trustees and supervisory officers be clarified, and that methods for providing further administrative support to supervisory officers be examined.

12.4. Performance appraisal

supervisory officers said they receive little systematic information about their performance and effectiveness on the job. Many expressed a wish for more direct feedback. A well-designed performance appraisal system provides this kind of feedback, but we found that very few boards were actually using such systems for supervisory officers, even where they were nominally in place. We therefore recommend:

Recommendation 10: That performance appraisal be the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer, and performance appraisal of the Chief Executive Officer be the responsibility of the employing board or, in the case of branch directors in the Ministry of Education, the Deputy Minister.

Although the next recommendation, concerning term contracts, does not arise directly from our data, it is consistent with our analysis. We believe that term contracts (renewable) would build in to the system an orientation toward continuous professional development and effectiveness. In the likely small number of cases of those returning to a lower paying position, salaries could be "red circled" until normal pay progression in the new position equals the previous salary.

Recommendation 11: That the contract between the supervisory officer/education officer and the employing board/ministry be a term contract on a five-year renewable basis. Performance appraisal would be cumulative, with both a formative and a summative report prior to December 31 of the fifth year of the contract.

12.5. Ministry of Education

There are differences between the job expectations of supervisory officers in school boards and those in the Ministry of Education, and significant differences within the ministry itself. The positions have common elements, such as curriculum development, implementation, review, document preparation, and policy development. They differ in the arena in which they work and in both the breadth and specificity of their work. While it is necessary for some Ministry of Education officers to hold the supervisory Officer Licence, it is probably not necessary for all positions. We recommend therefore:

Recommendation 12: That the present requirement in the Ministry of Education for the certificate (licence) be reviewed, in order to determine which ministry positions require such a qualification and which do not.

Our analysis indicates that ministry positions are perceived to be less attractive than board supervisory officer positions, largely because of salary and vacation time differences. This means that ministry positions rarely attract people who already hold supervisory officer positions. We therefore recommend that:

Recommendation 13: Innovative recruitment strategies be developed to attract a broader range of candidates to Ministry of Education positions, and a wider use of short-term secondments to and from boards be employed.

The Ministry of Education offers long-term career opportunities, but in the short term it can also offer broadening experiences to educational leaders who may wish to return to work in school boards.

It was difficult for us to obtain a clear picture of the working conditions of regional and central office supervisory officers. This was partly due to the diversity of assignments, and partly to the fact that at the time of our interviews, considerable personnel change was occurring in the ministry as a result of a major reorganization. We did, however, receive two strong impressions through our interviews. The first was that regional staff believe they do not participate sufficiently in policy initiatives developed at the central office. This lack of involvement, coupled with poor two-way communication and frequent re-assignment of responsibilities without adequate training or preparation, leads to a sense of alienation among many regional officers.

Our second impression was that many ministry supervisory officers spent excessive time on low-level tasks, such as repeatedly checking revisions to reports or letters to the public, or on apparently meaningless tasks, such as program reviews that did not lead to actions.

Recommendation 14: That the roles of Ministry of Education supervisory officers be reviewed to enhance communication between regional offices and the Mowat Block, enlarge scope for initiative, and to reduce time spent on low-impact activities.

This recommendation is aimed at improving the communication system between the Mowat Block and the regional offices with a view to increasing the involvement of regional staff in policy developments. It also seeks to promote greater leadership initiative and willingness to take risks.

12.6. Other issues

12.6.1. Role of principal

Since the role of principal was not part of our mandate, we did not gather data that would provide the basis for recommendations. However, the principalship is part of the continuum of educational leadership, and recommendations concerning certification and preparation at one level inevitably affect other levels. We are concerned about possible duplication between the requirements for principal certification and professional development, and the requirements we have suggested for the Advanced Skill Training modules. Furthermore, skill development programs need to be devised for all leadership positions, for their own sake, as well as for their role as a basis for higher-level skill development. We therefore recommend:

Recommendation 15: That the certification requirements for principals be reviewed in the light of the recommendations for the Ontario supervisory Officer Licence.

Consideration might be given to establishing Council-approved M.Ed. programs in curriculum and educational administration as an alternative to the principals' course, Parts I and II (the current system). An internship might also be established for all newly appointed vice-principals/principals prior to their receiving permanent certification. Term appointments should also be considered.

12.6.2. Interprovincial mobility

Ontario has been traditionally reluctant to hire educational leaders from other jurisdictions. Such a policy may be hindering the appointment of individuals who could enrich Ontario education. We therefore recommend:

Recommendation 16: That The Council approve the probationary licensing of out-of-province leaders who have the following qualifications:

a) an acceptable university graduate degree or equivalent;

b) three years of relevant leadership experience as designated and assessed by The Council;

c) successful completion of a Council-approved examination on the Ontario Education Act and Regulations;

d) a permanent teaching certificate or equivalent educational experience as approved by The Council (for academic candidates only);

e) an assessment from the hiring board of the status of Advanced Skill development in the designated skill areas, with a corresponding program for on-the-job Advanced Skill Training in areas requiring further development.

12.6.3. Review of the Education Act

It was noted in Chapter 1 that one of the factors leading to the series of research studies on the role of the supervisory officer was a concern that the duties as outlined in the Education Act no longer accurately reflected the responsibilities of incumbents around the province. Our analysis confirms that the list does not give an accurate picture of the role as it has evolved. We therefore recommend:

Recommendation 17: That the duties of the supervisory officer outlined in the Education Act be reviewed in light of the recommendations of the current research study, and the Act be rewritten to reflect the actual responsibilities of supervisory officers in Ontario.

12.7. Conclusion

In summary, our recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation 1: That the current certification system be discontinued, and replaced with a system as outlined in the remaining recommendations.

Recommendation 2: That there be formed The Council of Ontario Education Officers (The Council).

Recommendation 3: That the responsibilities of The Council be as follows: to develop, administer and monitor procedures for selection, licensing (and delicensing), training, and professional development of Ontario supervisory officers.

Recommendation 4: That a planning group be created to develop specific terms of reference, structure, and a time-line for the formation of The Council, and to determine its membership. The planning group would include representatives of the Ministry of Education, supervisory officers, Ontario school trustees, and the Ontario Teachers' Federation.

Recommendation 5: That an Ontario Supervisory Officer Licence be created to qualify candidates to serve as supervisory officers in school boards and to occupy certain positions as education officers in the Ontario Ministry of Education. The licence would be issued on a probationary or permanent basis as follows:

Recommendation 5.1: That this Licence will be issued on a probationary basis to candidates with the following qualifications:

- **a) an acceptable university graduate degree or equivalent (in the case of business candidates, the candidates must be an architect, certified general accountant, certified management accountant, chartered accountant, or professional engineer);**
- **b) three years of relevant leadership experience as designated and assessed by The Council;**
- **c) successful completion of a Council-approved examination on the Ontario Education Act and Regulations;**
- **d) a permanent teaching certificate or equivalent educational experience as approved by The Council (for academic candidates only);**
- **e) successful completion of an approved program of Advanced Skill Training which will require candidates to demonstrate competency in specific skill and knowledge areas. The Council will be responsible for developing guidelines, accrediting, and reviewing programs;**
- **f) an appointment as a supervisory officer either with a school board or the Ministry of Education.**

Recommendation 5.2: That the Supervisory Officer Licence become permanent on successful completion of a three-year internship with an Ontario school board or with the Ministry of Education. The Council will be responsible for guidelines, expectations and assessment procedures for the internship.

Recommendation 6: That The Council and provincial school boards work together to create a professional development plan for supervisory officers.

Recommendation 7: That school boards and the ministry develop long-range plans for leadership development, such plans to include leadership needs projections; recruitment strategies; provision for internal opportunities for professional growth, such as apprenticeships, specific assignments and the like, and provision for external professional growth opportunities, such as exchanges, special assignments, study leaves, and secondments. Such plans should pay special attention to gender and minority group issues in leadership.

Recommendation 8: That incumbent supervisory officers participate in Advanced Skill Training on a voluntary basis, and that boards and the Ministry of Education facilitate this process.

Recommendation 9: That the relative roles of trustees and supervisory officers be clarified, and that methods for providing further administrative support to supervisory officers be examined.

Recommendation 10: That performance appraisal be the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer, and performance appraisal of the Chief Executive Officer be the responsibility of the employing board or, in the case of branch directors in the Ministry of Education, the Deputy Minister.

Recommendation 11: That the contract between the supervisory officer/education officer and the employing board/ministry be a term contract on a five-year renewable basis. Performance appraisal would be cumulative, with both a formative and a summative report prior to December 31 of the fifth year of the contract.

Recommendation 12: That the present requirement in the Ministry of Education for the certificate (licence) be reviewed, in order to determine which ministry positions require such a qualification and which do not.

Recommendation 13: Innovative recruitment strategies be developed to attract a broader range of candidates to Ministry of Education positions, and a wider use of short-term secondments to and from boards be employed.

Recommendation 14: That the roles of Ministry of Education supervisory officers be reviewed to enhance communication between regional offices and the Mowat Block, enlarge scope for initiative, and to reduce time spent on low-impact activities.

Recommendation 15: That the certification requirements for principals be reviewed in the light of the recommendations for the Ontario supervisory Officer Licence.

Recommendation 16: That The Council approve the probationary licensing of out-of-province leaders who have the following qualifications:

a) an acceptable university graduate degree or equivalent;

b) three years of relevant leadership experience as designated and assessed by The Council;

c) successful completion of a Council-approved examination on the Ontario Education Act and Regulations;

d) a permanent teaching certificate or equivalent educational experience as approved by The Council (for academic candidates only);

e) **an assessment from the hiring board of the status of Advanced Skill development in the designated skill areas, with a corresponding program for on-the-job Advanced Skill Training in areas requiring further development.**

Recommendation 17: That the duties of the supervisory officer outlined in the Education Act be reviewed in light of the recommendations of the current research study, and the Act be rewritten to reflect the actual responsibilities of supervisory officers in Ontario.

The provision of leadership in educational systems has become a difficult, unpredictable, and often thankless task in modern society. The essence of our recommendations is to broaden opportunities for greater effectiveness, stature, and satisfaction in what is an important and complex role.

Education is once again at the top of the political agenda. The last time this occurred, in the 1960s, the situation was one of numerical expansion. This time, quality and excellence are the watchwords. Leadership and quality in teaching are intimately related. We believe our recommendations, if implemented, will contribute significantly to producing supervisory officers capable of providing the kind of leadership required for the 1990s and beyond.

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Appendix A
Contractual Questions

"Institution, organizations
Preparation, certification
Professionalism of "S.O's"

To Investigate:

1. how well does the existing system of preparing, certifying and maintaining the professionalism of supervisory officers enable them to perform their roles?
2. what changes are needed in the existing system of preparation, certification and maintenance of professionalism?
3. what roles do existing institutions and organizations play in the present system of preparation, certification and maintenance of professionalism; what roles might they best play; and what roles are they prepared to play?
4. what new organizations or institutions might there be room for or a need for in a reformed system of preparation, certification and maintenance of professionalism? Is there, for example, a place for a self-governing professional body that would look after matters such as certification?
5. what alternative alignments of institutions and organizations should be considered in reforming the system?
6. what preparation would be required on the part of the various institutions and organizations before they were able to play an appropriate part in a reformed system of education and certification of S.O.s?

"Education and Professional
Development of S.O's"

To Investigate:

1. what kinds of work would be associated with the various normative models developed in the related study by Queen's University?
2. what inputs do various kinds of S.O.s need to obtain? In what contexts should they be able to work? What processes should they be able to carry out? What outputs should they be able to produce?
3. what should all candidates for certification as S.O.s learn before they are given certification?
4. what should candidates for the various kinds of S.O. roles learn before they are appointed to an S.O. position?
5. what should all S.O.s and the various kinds of S.O.s learn after they have been appointed to S.O. positions?
6. what ways of acquiring desirable pre-service and in-service learning would be efficacious, and what would be the advantages and disadvantages of the various ways?
7. how might the various kinds of learning by S.O.s be evaluated, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of each kind of evaluation?

"Roles of S.O's - Legislation
Regulations, Policies"

To Investigate:

1. what functions in Ontario school boards and in the Ministry of Education do supervisory officers contribute to?
2. are there other school board and Ministry functions that would seem appropriate for supervisory officers?
3. what are the roles of supervisory officers in Ontario, in the functions they actually contribute to, and what might they be in the functions they might appropriately contribute to?
4. what are the actual duties and powers assigned to supervisory officers, in the performance of their roles?
5. what other duties and powers might be assigned to supervisory officers appropriately?
6. can normative models of the roles of various kinds of supervisory officials be built?
7. if so, what powers and duties would be appropriate for each model?
8. what changes to existing statutory duties and powers of supervisory officers should be considered by the Ministry?
9. what changes to other parts of legislation and regulations would follow from the changes proposed under 8 above?
10. what advice should be given to school boards regarding their policies?

Appendix B

Interview Schedules (for Supervisory Officers, Chairmen, and Principals)

SO Interview Schedule

A. Introduction: Review purpose and method of study, deal with any questions.
Mention that this is a Ministry study, support of OAEAO, random selection of boards, and look at role of SO in Ministry. Interview will cover own role, and also reflections and suggestions re role of supervisory officers in general.

B. Description of present role/function: Research Questions I and II. Begin with a brief review of the first section of the pre-interview questionnaire, just confirmation of path travelled to reach present job. Explain to the interviewee that we have looked at the job description (if there is one), and now want to know how this actually works in practice. These first questions all refer to the interviewee's job *over the last two months*.

1. In the first group of questions, I want to get a sense of what you see as the most important aspects of your job. As you consider your daily worklife, over the last two months, what are the major tasks of your job? Start with the most important, and talk about 3 or 4.

2. Over the current year, which of these responsibilities consumed the most time? Can you elaborate on this? (find out how and why) In general, how many hours per week do you spend on your job? (get starting and finishing times, number of evening meetings).

3. As you carry out your responsibilities, how much discretionary authority do you have?

4. For most SOs, dealing with others is an important feature of the job. Can you tell me who you deal with, and for what purposes? How important are these dealings for carrying out your responsibilities?

5. Again over the last two months, what people or groups have had the greatest impact on how you spend your time?

6. What expectations do others hold for your role? And how realistic are these expectations?

7. In carrying out your responsibilities, you deal with many groups. Are any of these relationships particularly difficult? What might account for this?

8. Going beyond just the last two months, and thinking of your responsibilities and contributions over the longer term, what skills are vital for the performance of your job? (in other words, what is it that you really have to be able to do?)

C. Career path to present: Research Questions III and VI

- Again refer to questionnaire, in more detail this time, to confirm description of background, experience and movement.

1. You indicated on the questionnaire what professional development you had found valuable. Can you tell me why it was so successful?

2. Why do you think you got this job? (What were the advantages you had over the other candidates?)

3. Think about how well your training and experience prepared you for the demands of your current role. What aspects of your training seem to be most relevant to success in your current job? What aspects of your experience seem to be most relevant?

4. When you started in your current job, were there any aspects of your function you felt your training and experience had not prepared you for? (in other words, gaps between preparation and job demands)?

5. Is there any kind of PD or support that you would find useful at this stage in your career?

D. Board context (including role clarity, policies/procedures etc. affecting SO job). Research Question IV

1. I know something of this Board's organizational structure (give brief outline). In what ways do the organizational structure, practices or procedures help or hinder your work?

2. What would be the impact on the educational system if your role ceased to exist?

E. Satisfaction/dissatisfaction: Research Question V

1. Think about your job over the past few months. What two or three aspects of the job have given you the most satisfaction?
Can you outline these, explaining how and why they were satisfying?

2. Over the same period of time, what two or three aspects of the job have given you the least satisfaction, or the most frustration?
Again, can you outline these, explaining how and why they were not satisfying?

3. Do you get a sense of how effective you are in carrying out your role? If so, what information is there and how do you get it.

4. What features of your position would you like to change? (Identify one or two). How feasible would it be to make such changes (in other words, what would have to happen for the changes to take place)?

5. What are the rewards of this job, in other words, what keeps you going? What costs are there?

In your view, how do the rewards and the costs balance? (Asking for costs/benefits judgment).

F. Suggestions re selection, P.D., certification of supervisory officers: Research Question VII

1. In what ways do you think the current selection process (for certification as a supervisory officer) could be improved?

- In what ways could the selection process for SO positions in your board be improved?

- Are SO jobs perceived as attractive? Are best candidates being attracted?

2. Do you think SOs need to possess provincial certification? If no, do you have any other suggestions for accreditation? What agency or body should be in charge of such accreditation?

3. Do you believe SOs from a business career path are qualified to fill the role of Director?

G. Wrap-up: Research Question III:

1. You've talked about your career to date, and about your present position. Where do see your career going in the future?

2. Do you foresee any major changes in the way the SO role is defined in the future?

3. Do you anticipate any major shifts in the number of women in the SO role? In other administrative positions?

4. Any other comments? Anything we have not talked about that you believe is important?

Explain that we would like all SOs to complete the questionnaire on Role Stress, and that we ask them to complete it over the next day or two, then send it in the stamped addressed envelope.

Interview with Chairman of Board

Introduce study, answer any questions etc. Find out how long person has been a trustee, and how long has served as chairman.

1. Can you describe features of the local community that impinge on its school system? How do these factors have an effect?

2. What are the key responsibilities of the Director? (focus on last 2-3 months)?

3. What skills are absolutely necessary for the Director to function effectively in this board?

4. What do you expect of the Director vis-a-vis trustees?
   Possibilities: liaison with staff and schools
   implement policy decisions of board
   public relations for board
   other?

   How do trustees communicate with the Director?
   regularly scheduled meetings
   meet as needed
   other?

5. What do you expect of SOs as far as trustees are concerned? (don't try to be systematic here, going through positions one by one)

   Are there any guidelines that govern the relationship and communication between trustees and SOs?

6. Has a director been selected while you have served as a trustee? If so, can you describe the selection process?
   - how did you find candidates? did you look beyond your board?
   - any informal soliciting to supplement formal advertising?
   - did you have a set of criteria? how were these developed?
   - can you suggest improvements to this selection process?

7. Do you believe SOs from the business career path are qualified to function as Directors of education? Why or why not?

8. Any other comments or suggestions? Anything we have not talked about that you feel is important?

Interview with Principals

Introduction, explaining study, why we are interviewing people beyond SOs, etc. Start by drawing distinction among 3 types of SOs, Director, central SOs, and area or school SOs. Ask principals to distinguish among these in their comments.

1. In your role as principal, do you deal with the Director? Central SOs? Area SOs? Can you describe the focus and nature of these dealings?

2. What do you see as the main responsibilities of each of these roles? Director? Central SOs? Area SOs?

3. What changes do you think should be made in their roles? What would have to happen for these changes to take place?

4. Do you ever see the Director in your school? Central SOs? Area SO? How often? For what purpose?

5. What do SOs do that helps you on your job? What do they do that hinders you or gets in your way? Can you identify things they do that are irrelevant to how you do your job?

6. What are the skills of an effective SO? In other words, what skills does an SO need to be effective in the role?

7. What training do you believe is necessary for SOs? Is there any formal mechanism in your board for providing training for those aspiring to SO positions?

8. What professional experience do you believe is essential for SOs?

9. Do you believe SOs should have provincial certification? Any other suggestions for accreditation? Who should be in charge?

10. In your board, what are the criteria for selection for SO positions? Are these criteria publicly stated? What changes, if any, would you suggest in selection criteria?

11. Do you see the board making any particular efforts to increase the number of women serving as SOs? If so, what is happening? Has there been any impact?

12. Any other comments or suggestions? Anything else you believe is important?

Appendix C

Questionnaires (Pre-Interview, and Organizational Role Stress)

Pre-Interview Questionnaire

Name: _____

Board: _____

1. Present position: _____

2. How long have you been in your current position (including this year)? _____ years

3. Were you appointed to this position from within the Board or from outside? _____

4. Prior to your present position, how long did you spend in each of the following positions:

	No. of Years	Board
Classroom teacher	_____	_____
Vice-Principal	_____	_____
Principal	_____	_____
Consultant/coordinator	_____	_____
Other supervisory officer roles (specify)	_____	_____
Superintendent	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____

5. Was your school experience mainly: elementary _____

secondary _____

6. Academic background - Please list degrees, and granting institutions:

Degree	Area of Specialization	Institution	Year
_____	_____	_____	____
_____	_____	_____	____
_____	_____	_____	____
_____	_____	_____	____

7. Other professional qualifications (certificates, diplomas, etc.)

_____

_____

8. Do you have experience in a field outside education? _____

If yes, which area:		Number of Years:
Business	_____	_____
Government	_____	_____
Trades	_____	_____
Other (specify)	_____	_____

9. What professional development activities have you found particularly useful over the past two to three years?

PD Activity	Organization	Form (workshop, seminar, etc.)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Briefly indicate how they were useful: _____

_____

_____

10. What professional training should aspiring Supervisory Officers have?

Type of Training	Essential	Desirable	Not Helpful
Teacher training	_____	_____	_____
Business or management training	_____	_____	_____
Principal training	_____	_____	_____
Specialized training for Supervisory Officer	_____	_____	_____
Graduate Studies	_____	_____	_____

11. What professional experience should aspiring Supervisory Officers have?

Experience	Essential	Desirable	Not Helpful
Teaching	_____	_____	_____
Business	_____	_____	_____
School administration	_____	_____	_____
Staff (consultant/coordinator)	_____	_____	_____
Ministry of Education	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify)	_____	_____	_____

12. Personal data:

Your age _____

Marital status _____

Number of children _____

Organizational Role Stress Scale

Udai Pareek's Organizational Role Stress Scale[1] was designed to assess perceptions of organizational roles, and to identify for each respondent both an overall level of *organizational role stress* and also scores on ten different components of role stress.

For each of fifty questions concerning perceptions of job role, the respondent is asked whether the statement represents his or her situation *very frequently, frequently, sometimes, occasionally* or *scarcely never*. Questions relate to issues such as the scope and responsibilities of the role, the relationship of the job to family and social life, conflict or ambiguity in the role, and work load.

The response to each question contributes to the score on one of ten sub-scales, each of which represents one of the components of role stress. The ten sub-scales are as follows:

- Inter Role Distance
- Role Stagnation
- Role Expectations
- Role Erosion
- Role Overload
- Role Isolation
- Personal Inadequacy
- Self Role Conflict
- Role Ambiguity

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[1]Pareek, Udai. (1983). Organizational Role Stress. In Goodstein, L., & Pfeiffer, J. (Eds.) *The 1983 Annual for Facilitators, Trainers, and Consultants*. University Associates, San Diego, California, 115-123.

Appendix D
Information for Participating Boards

Information for Participating Boards

Summary of research

The research is being done for the Ministry of Education, by teams at Queen's University, the University of Western Ontario, and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

This is an important study, involving a large number of interviews in 26 boards across Ontario. Sample boards have been chosen on a random basis, taking account of various factors, ensuring representation from boards which are urban and rural, separate and public, Francophone, of all sizes, and from all regions.

The research will examine the roles of Supervisory Officers throughout the province, identifying key skills required to carry out these functions. On the basis of data collected from a wide range of knowledgeable persons, the research team will develop policy recommendations concerning training, selection and accreditation procedures for Supervisory Officers in Ontario.

What is involved for boards who participate in this research

- The board will be asked to designate a contact person through whom the board's participation can be coordinated. The research team would deal with this person for instance in making arrangements for interviews.

- The research team would like to interview the following:
  - Director
  - All central Supervisory Officers
  - Area Supervisory Officers (normally 50% will be interviewed, but details will be determined in consultation with each board)
  - Chairman of the Board
  - President of Secondary School Principals' Association
  - President of Elementary School Principals' Association

  Interviews with the Director and other SOs are expected to last approximately 1 1/2 hours, while the other interviews would be about an hour. Interviews will be scheduled at times agreed upon by the board and the research team.

- The research team may request background information about the board, such as that contained in the annual report, or information about board standing committees or task forces. Such requests would be made through the designated contact person.

In the next stage of the research, the research team plans to observe Supervisory Officers in some boards. Such observations, in which a researcher would follow a Supervisory Officer over a one or two day period, would be as unobtrusive as possible, and would be arranged in consultation with boards concerned.

All data collected will be treated as strictly confidential, and no boards will be identified in the final research reports. At the conclusion of the project, the research team will be happy to meet with groups from participating boards to provide feedback about the study.

Conclusion

In thanking you for considering the request to participate in the study, we wish to emphasize again the importance of the research. Since recommendations drawn from the study will influence selection, preparation and certification of Supervisory Officers in the future, it is vital that such recommendations be based on full and accurate information.

Appendix E

The Role of Women as Supervisory Officers: A Review of the Literature

The Role of Women as Supervisory Officers: A Review of the Literature and Implications for the Future

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Michael Fullan

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Paper presented at CSSE Conference.

Winnipeg, June 1986.

DRAFT: not to be quoted without permission from the authors.

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1 Introduction

This paper is the first step of what will become a more elaborate statement on the role of women as supervisory officers. We will be continuing over the next year to develop and extend the main themes in the literature, and to represent some of our own findings from a large scale study of supervisory officers, which contains interviews with some of the few women in these roles in Ontario.

We also need to stress the importance of taking a past-present-future time perspective on the issues because the explanations that held in 1975 are not necessarily accurate in 1985. Women in administration represent a rapidly changing phenomenon and one must look carefully to determine both the trends and their meaning. We suspect that the analyses and strategies most appropriate for 1985-1995 will be radically different than for either of the previous two decades.

2 Background

Administrative positions in education, whether they be at the school or district level, have traditionally been occupied by men. The question raised again and again in the literature is "Why, when the majority of teachers are women, do top managerial positions continue to be occupied by men?" In Ontario, 1982 figures show that of 600 persons employed as supervisory officers in Ontario, only 25 (4.2%) were women (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1984). The figures for the positions of principal or vice-principal (the pool from which higher administrators are usually drawn) show that 11.1% were women (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1984). The situation in the United States is similar, with recent figures (Linn & Hall, 1986) showing women holding approximately 1 to 2% of the superintendencies. It is ironic that while women have gained ground in male-dominated professions such as law, business and medicine, in education, seen as a "female" profession, they are still having trouble being promoted into administrative positions. (A word concerning terminology is in order here: in the United States and some parts of Canada, "superintendent" refers to the chief executive position, called "Director" in Ontario. In Ontario, "supervisory officer" refers to all positions above principal, positions which might be referred to elsewhere as "district office line administrators" or "assistant superintendents".)

Over the last ten to fifteen years, such figures have remained relatively constant, in spite of efforts to change the distributions. Canadian figures even suggest a decline in the proportion of women in school administration positions (Statistics Canada, 1984). Writers (Brown, 1981) have attempted to formulate some of the financial costs to education when the talent pool of women in education is not adequately represented in managerial positions, citing data to suggest that women entering education are better qualified than are men, although these attempts have been subject to criticism (Anisef, 1981). In this paper, we primarily direct attention to administrative positions above the level of principal, but because of a shortage of literature specifically addressed to these positions, reference will also be made to research on women in the role of principal, or in "educational administration" at an unspecified level. Many of the issues are similar, and to a large extent principals provide the pool from which candidates for higher positions are drawn.

In this paper, we review literature relevant to various aspects of the role of women in educational administration. There are several threads in the research, differing not only in the approach to the problem, but also in the definition of what the problem actually is.

The focus of most of the work is seeking an explanation for the under-representation of women, with a strong emphasis on devising strategies for change. This is not value-free research: implied in the statement of figures is the assumption that the current role of women in educational administration is not satisfactory, that the proportion of women in administrative positions should more closely represent that in teaching, and that it is important to formulate plans for action that will result in change. Initial suggestions focussed on women themselves, helping them reach higher level positions through means such as raised levels of aspiration, leadership training, and use of networking (Berry, 1979, Biklen & Brannigan, 1980). These plans were followed by suggestions for more far-reaching support such as affirmative actions programs, either at a local level (Weintraub, 1984), or through legislation (Abella, 1985, Weintraub, 1985). More wide-ranging proposals for social change have been made, to do with organization of both work and families (Ferguson, 1984). A strong feminist perspective is evident in much of this work, particularly in recent theoretical research (Ferguson, 1984, Gilligan, 1982, Reynolds,1985a).

It was pointed out six years ago that:

> The small proportion of women in educational administration has remained constant throughout a decade of supposedly heightened sensitivity to sex discrimination and despite efforts to bring about long-delayed reforms (Lyman & Speizer, 1980) (p. 25).

Six years later, there are isolated instances of success (Lyman & Speizer, 1980, Metzger, 1985), but no widespread pattern of change. What accounts for the persistence of male dominance in educational administration? The literature dealing with the issue reveals a disjunction between themes of the 1970's and themes of the 1980's.

3 Literature of the 1970's

The work of the 1970's can be seen as coming from the liberal tradition, with an onus on the individual, and a basis in a framework of justice. The assumption of most of the work seems to be "once we know what is wrong, we can fix it"

Socialization and sex-role stereotyping.

Throughout the 1970's writers attempted to explain the failure of women to gain administrative positions in terms of socialization and sex role stereotyping; what has been termed the "women's place" model (Estler, 1975). In accounts such as those found in the collections of papers in Berry (1979) and Biklen and Brannigan (1980), the argument is advanced that the existence of sex role and occupational stereotypes, and the socialization patterns for both men and women that lead to

acceptance of such stereotypes, explain discrimination in hiring for administrative positions.

Reviews of research on sex-role stereotypes and sex role socialization often link the concepts in an argument that outlines sex role stereotypes, shows how people are socialized to accept them, and goes on to suggest that their acceptance, particularly by men, explains discrimination (Adkison, 1981, Estler, 1975). From childhood, girls are rewarded for behaviour which is passive and conformist, rather than assertive and independent, and thus do not learn behaviours needed for success in management levels of large organizations. Because their behaviour is seen as organizationally inappropriate, stereotypes are reinforced, and organizations are less likely to promote women.

As Adkison (1981) points out in her review, considerable evidence supports this argument that sex role stereotypes and sex role socialization reduce both the probabilities of women seeking leadership positions, and the likelihood of their being selected for such positions.

It is postulated that the differential socialization of women, emphasizing nurturance and the value of "real work" in the home, does not prepare women for a career involving hierarchical progressions, such as promotion from teacher through principal to superintendent. Such an argument gains support from research on the job attitudes of men and women (Hennig & Jardim, 1977), and from studies (Berry, 1979), showing that even highly qualified women had lower aspirations than men. (Of course, such women may have been simply realistically assessing their chances of success).

Once socialization and sex-role stereotyping were identified as contributing to the low representation of women in administrative positions, certain intervention strategies were implemented to change the situation. Women were encouraged to set up "women's networks", to aspire and prepare for positions of responsibility, to seek out opportunities for developing skill and visibility. The assumption seemed to be that once women changed, so would the statistics.

Much of the work referred to above was carried out during the 1970's. A study done a few years later shows somewhat different results (Reich & LaFountaine, 1982). On the variable of "Career Commitment" for instance, although the women teachers showed somewhat lower levels of this variable than did the men teachers, the differences were not large, and taken as a whole, these data present a striking contrast to that obtained in earlier studies (Reich & LaFountaine, 1982). Reich and LaFountaine go on to conclude:

> What seems to have been documented is a transition point between a traditional and more egalitarian order. Although there are few empirical reference points, we have noted the increased level of aspiration evidenced by women in the present study.... (1982, p. 82).

There is some evidence then, that at least in Ontario, women teachers were moving away from acceptance of the traditional expectations. Whether the educational establishment was also moving in this direction was not documented by these authors.

Discrimination.

A second approach to explaining (and then correcting) the imbalance of men and women in administrative roles, the discrimination-model explanation, can be seen as a variant of the sex-role stereotyping and socialization approach, in that it points to institutional patterns in the training and hiring of administrators that encourage the promotion of men rather than women. Studies have shown that women administrators have spent much longer in the classroom before being promoted (Lyman & Speizer, 1980). Administrators, in appointing new members to the group, tend to look more favorably on those who are like them, and thus men are likely to rate other men higher than they rate women (Kanter, 1977). Focussing on discrimination as an explanation of the scarcity of women administrators does not necessarily conflict with the "women's place" model, in that organizations are acting out and giving form to the sex role stereotyping referred to earlier.

The discrimination model led to somewhat different intervention strategies for increasing the numbers of women promoted, primarily formal or informal types of legislated changes. Organizations were encouraged to provide compensatory leadership training for women, and plans for employment equity (Abella, 1985) and affirmative action (Weintraub, 1984) were seen as ways of guaranteeing career options for women.

Organizational research

A number of writers have argued that the structural characteristics of power and the social compositions of peer groups explain the absence of women from roles such as superintendent (Kanter, 1977, Wolman & Frank, 1975). Such work is a further development of the discrimination model outlined above, in that it examines more carefully exactly how organizations discriminate against women, through the impact of organizational structures, and the practices and procedures that characterize the functioning of the organization.

The impetus for much of this work came from noting that large numbers of women did not conform to sex role stereotypes, and yet were still not advancing in careers. Women seeking administrative positions appeared self-confident, and showed ambition, assertiveness, and a realistic assessment of administration as a career (Edson, 1980) (cited by Adkison, 1981). Aspirations were rising among such women, yet at the end of the 1970's, women continued to occupy only a few positions in educational administration. A rapid increase in the number seeking formal qualifications, and the implementation of both affirmative action policies and anti-discrimination legislation had not translated into professional gains.

Kanter (1977), in looking at the culture of the organization, examined the role of women within it, identifying factors within the organization which determine the experiences and reactions of its members. She suggested that one of the prime causes of the difficulties of women in management came from their minority status, and that as organizations increased the proportion of women, gender

inequalities would decrease. She illustrated this view in a humourous book, *A tale of "O": On being different in an organization* (1980). Kanter reports that when an administrative team includes only one or two women, men in such groups become more conscious of their behavior, and tend to emphasize the differences between themselves and the women. She goes on to suggest that if women are accepted into the group, they are expected to "play strictly by the rules", to wait their turn for promotion rather than aggressively push for advancement, to perform very well to prove women can do the job, but not excel enough to generate jealousy (pp. 219-230).

Wolman and Frank (1975), in examining the behaviour of female graduate students in otherwise male groups, again found that token women had difficulty being accepted as members of the group. Those who used their visibility to become leaders were ignored, while others withdrew from active participation.

Adkison (1981) summarizes research indicating that men are more likely than women to have undergone orientation to administrative positions, to have been "sponsored" by a mentor and to have role models to emulate. Positions such as elementary principal and curriculum consultant, where most women with administrative aspirations are located, do not provide the visibility and opportunities to interact with superordinates that are useful, or even necessary, for further advancement.

Kanter (1977) concludes that the structure of opportunity and power, and the social composition of peer groups shape the behavior of both men and women in hierarchical organizations. She points out that where opportunities are limited, both men and women display behaviors stereotyped as "female", such as limiting aspirations, or seeking satisfaction in interpersonal relationships rather than task performance.

Historical background

As Reynolds (1985b) states, "We need to ask not only *why* so few women have become school administrators, but *how* it is that this has happened" (p. 46). She has pointed to work in the history of education concerning the "feminization of teaching" (Prentice, 1983, Strober & Tyack, 1980). Strober and Tyack for instance, speak of the increased demands for teachers just as young women were becoming more educated, and less needed for domestic service. Teaching was seen as an ideal preparation for motherhood, thus eminently suitable as an occupation for women. However, concerns about potential discipline problems were handled by vesting ultimate authority in male principals and superintendents (Strober & Tyack, 1980). In their extensive review of research on teacher education, Lanier and Little (1986) outline the historical origins of teacher education, showing the development of a view that "serious thinking and decision making in education was to be carried out by male members of the middle and upper classes" (p. 533). They point to evidence (Powell, 1976) that as women began to comprise the bulk of the teaching force, they were nonetheless excluded from the more

thorough and substantive professional education enjoyed by teachers who looked forward to promotions as principals and superintendents (cited in Lanier and Little, p. 533). For men, teaching was seen as an "up-and-out" occupation, but for women, it was to be an "in-and-out" as they were expected to move from teaching to marriage.

These attitudes towards women in the role of teacher coincided with rather different developments in government and industry, the rise of a new class of professionals, the managers. The acceptance of a "rational model" of organization based on social science findings, led to a belief in the necessity of managers having analytical problem-solving skills, and a capacity to get aside personal and emotional concerns to focus on tasks (Kanter, 1977). These, of course, are traits traditionally associated with man rather than women.

The development of educational administration was influenced both by this "managerial revolution" and also by the "feminization" of teaching that had taken place. In Adkison's words:

> Professionalism served to differentiate administrators from teachers, emphasizing the "masculine" concerns of financial, organizational, and mechanical problems rather than the "feminine" concerns of nurturing, imparting values, and instructing children (p. 314).

4 Literature of the 1980s

In the past few years, perhaps since 1980, there have been significant changes in the literature on women in educational administration. The most immediately noticeable change is the sharp decrease in the number of published articles. It is as though once the explanations and suggested remedies were offered, the subject was seen as satisfactorily dealt with, and within the mainstream of Educational Administration literature at least, was replaced by other topics. Alternatively, if the analysis was incomplete and thus the solutions not appropriate, there would be little motivation for following through.

The second change is that the focus of research has shifted away from seeking explanations of women's low representation, and for the most part from suggesting specific strategies to redress the imbalance. Several new themes emerge from recent work.

Experiences and attitudes of women administrators

Considerable attention has been devoted to studying women administrators in education, either in the principal or supervisory officer roles. This focus is not totally new, as considerable work was done in the 1970's on comparing performance of male and female principals (Fishel & Pottker, 1979, Gross & Trask, 1976). However, the results of this research were somewhat controversial, in that reported differences could be explained by such extraneous factors as size of school rather than sex of the incumbent.

Career Path

A number of researchers have examined the careers of women administrators (Crow, 1985, Lyman & Speizer, 1980, McGee, 1979, Pfiffner, 1979, Woo, 1985, Linn & Hall, 1986)], sometimes in comparison with the careers of male administrators. There is some inconsistency in the findings, but in general, woman administrators are older than their male counterparts (Linn & Hall, 1986). They are older when first appointed to department head or vice-principal, for instance, and for this reason alone may miss high level positions, since they move up through career stages more slowly. Research on family status of women administrators, and the career patterns they have followed, again shows some inconsistencies, but researchers such as Linn & Hall (1986) suggest women superintendents are less likely than their male counterparts to have children. When evaluating such research, it must be noted that conclusions are often based on studying persons currently in administrative positions, and the results may not be true of the upcoming generation of administrators. Many studies are little more than "snapshots" taken at a particular point in time.

Conflicts and Attitudes

Some writers have looked closely at successful women adminstrators to explore their attitudes about their work. Woo (1985) for instance, found that the women she studied felt that they were able to successfully carry out both their professional and personal roles, primarily because of their strong determination to succeed. Their own motivation apparently carried them through organizational hurdles, demanding professional roles, and family/career conflicts. She found, however, that "they have not yet fused the new values with the traditional ones, and thus experience internal conflict" (p. 288).

In a specifically Canadian context, Porat (1985) looked at female principals in Alberta, and found a similar picture. The principals felt their progress had been somewhat haphazard, that they had not really planned to become administrators. Although there was variation, most respondents spoke of pressures involved in being a female and an administrator, in terms of conflict between expectations of the job and other expectations of women in society, particularly with regard to family roles (Porat, 1985).

An examination of much of the literature in the area points to the mixed messages from society, a conflict of roles for women administrators, particularly for women with children. If women administrators are less likely to have children (Adkison, 1981, McDade & Drake, 1982), this suggests the role conflicts actually keep many women out of administrative positions. Women themselves, or those responsible for appointments, have seen the demands of administrator as incompatible with the demands of having children in the home.

Radical feminist work

Another major theme is the emergence of a strong feminist voice in the literature (Ferguson, 1984, Gilligan, 1982, Reynolds,1985a, Reynolds,1985b, Schmuck, 1980). These writers represent what has been termed the "radical feminist" as opposed to the "liberal feminist" view. Liberal feminism can be seen as accepting organizational arrangements as they are, and focussing on increasing the successful participation of women in these organizations. Radical feminists, on the other hand, question the organizational arrangements themselves. Writers such as Ferguson (1984) believe that the problem is not letting more women in, but rather suggesting an alternative, nonbureaucratic approach to the problem of organization. In this view, books that are "success manuals" for women in organizations are seen as part of the problem rather than as part of the solution. Ferguson (1984) points out that

> Popular culture in America has always evinced a fondness for literature that proclaims the power of positive thinking as a cure for socioeconomic disadvantage.....So the current spate of "how to succeed in the organization" books are simply variations on a long-standing theme.....
>
> The important difference now is that substantial numbers of these books are directed at women. They are, by their own definition, survival manuals for women in bureaucracies.....They take the existing institutional arrangements for granted and seek strategies in integrate women into these arrangements (p. 182-183).

The image Ferguson draws of traditional bureaucratic organizations suggests that there may be places within them for small numbers of women, but that by their very nature, there is no possibility for widespread change or sharing of authority in a different way. Power structures are not amenable to this type of change.

McBroom's (1986) work on the experience of women in high-powered business organizations can be seen as an illustration of Ferguson's argument. McBroom shows what happens when organizations are based on more traditionally masculine values. Women assimilating to high positions in these organizations make up what McBroom terms "the third sex", in danger of developing an "Amazonian soul". More and more, women can have what men have at work, but they sacrifice what men have at home, that is, children and a warm familial refuge from work (McBroom, 1986). McBroom believes that highly successful women in the business and financial world have adopted a masculine model and rejected a feminine one. Following the pattern identified earlier as the "Queen Bee" syndrome (Berry & Kushner, 1979), success becomes linked to the idea of masculinity. McBroom's top women in the world of finance cut themselves off from images of femininity and imitated male models, assimilating to a male culture of work (McBroom, 1986). It is suggested that by rejecting old images of femininity, such women have also sacrificed nurturance, empathy and compassion. As McBroom points out, without these qualities, the workplace is a cold and friendless place. Although McBroom is clear in describing the problem, she is less helpful in suggesting just how women can move ahead in the male culture without succumbing to its worst aspects, or in suggesting any other solution.

Research on bureaucratic and business organizations and women's role within them can be helpful in understanding the role of women in educational administration. However, it must be kept in mind that schools are different from business organizations; that however imperfectly it is realized, the purpose of the school is the education of children, the provision of programs rather than profit. This distinction can be linked to Gilligan's (1982) elaboration of what she terms "the ethic of care" rather than "the ethic of rights". The ethic of care grows out of the fact that women's identity is defined in the context of social relationships (Gilligan, 1982). Schools, as distinct from bureaucratic corporate structures, can perhaps be seen as falling more within the "ethic of care", with a greater emphasis on social connectedness rather than on impersonal hierarchy.

To the extent that schools and educational administration can combine elements of the ethic of care and the ethic of rights, an opportunity is available for schools and school districts to be in the forefront in developing organizational frameworks and processes to effectively meet the needs of all members. As some of the more recent feminist writers have pointed out, many of these issues are better seen as "gender issues" rather than "women's issues". Questions of balancing work with personal or family commitments are not specifically women's problems. For instance, in an examination of women administrators in education, one writer concludes that:

> These women have paid a price for their success. It is the same price that men pay when they have a consuming commitment to professional success; loss of time for leisure activities and for building personal relationships (Woo, 1985) (p. 287).

A recent description of the "androgynous" administrator suggests a possible direction for thinking of school administration (Erickson, 1985). Erickson, drawing on the results of a study of female principals, sees the successful school administrator as androgynous, in that:

> An androgynous individual uses a full range of situation appropriate behaviours, regardless of whether those behaviours are typically considered to be masculine or feminine. In other words, an androgynous school administrator...feels equally comfortable hugging a child or reprimanding a staff member (p. 288).

Radical feminist writers suggest as Ferguson would say there is no solution within current organizational frameworks, but perhaps educational administration has an opportunity to provide a model, building on Erickson's notion of the androgynous administrator. As school administrators learn to react competently to specific situations, without regard to cultural demands for behaviour seen as "feminine" or "masculine", female administrators are freed from conflict about being assertive or strong. Although Erickson restricts her discussion to women, such a model for administrative behaviour seems equally appropriate for men. The needs of both teachers and students are more likely to be met in such an organization. Such a model may be difficult to extend beyond the school to the level of system-wide administration, but attempts to associate administrative success with "masculine" or "feminine" behaviors are likely to add little to the understanding of effective administration.

5 Conclusion

There is some evidence that women are moving increasingly into the ranks of educational administration (see Appendix A), but the size of the shift is not dramatic. In order to fully answer the question "why do women teach and men manage?", and indeed to eventually make the question unnecessary, fundamental questions should be asked about the organizational practices and values of educational systems. How must the educational system change to make more use of women at the higher levels? Rather than simply asking and helping women to acquire the training, the networks, and the behavior of men, more basic questions will direct attention beyond the promotion of individual women to improving opportunities for all women. Such fundamental questions about the nature of organizational and work arrangements may not be asked by successful administrators (male or female) since the system has worked for them.

In spite of the lack of dramatic change over the time covered by this literature review, there is reason to speculate about possible changes lying ahead. Several factors are converging and interacting in powerful ways for the immediate future and we predict that the net result will be a significant shift in the numbers of women in administrative roles over the next five to ten years. We clearly label this prediction as speculative because we do not yet have data to support it. The factors involved are:

1. The new women administrator is very different than the one of fifteen or twenty years ago.

2. Aspirations have increased, and expectations of success are also increasing.

3. Even more important, *leadership skills and capacity* have had a chance to develop among potential women leaders. This required time, and was one of the main reasons for no influx of women (the other reason was limited openings) in the last fifteen years.

4. There are now more women now on the "first floor" (vice-principals, principals) (again see Appendix A). This increases the pool of interested and qualified women from which to draw for more senior positions.

5. In Ontario at least, there is an increasingly strong program/curriculum priority. This program emphasis influences the criteria for promotion, often to the advantage of women, who may have greater skills and interest in curriculum and curricular leadership.

6. There has been some increase in sensitivity in the hiring/promotion policies and practices, due at least in part to affirmative action, and also the increase in highly qualified women.

7. There will be great new demographic opportunities at all levels in Ontario because of expected retirement patterns. Over the next five to ten years, many will retire from supervisory officer and principal positions, opening up a large number of promotional opportunities.

In conclusion then, we predict that the long-delayed shift in the proportion of women administrators will finally occur. Whether the difficulties and role conflicts experienced by many women will also continue we are less willing to predict.

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Appendix F

List of Study Materials for Supervisory Officer Examinations

SUPERVISORY OFFICER'S CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

STUDY INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

1. Regulation 276, as amended, states that

"The examinations...shall be based on,

a) Acts and regulations affecting the operation of schools and school boards;

b) the curriculum guidelines, and related reference materials pertaining to elementary and secondary education in Ontario; and

c) theories and practices of supervision, administration, and business organization that may be applicable to the effective operation of a school system."

2. Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines, numbered memoranda, as well as policy-related publications such as those listed below are available in schools and school board offices:

Circular 14: Textbooks

The Formative Years: Provincial Curriculum Policy for the Primary and Junior Divisions of the Public and Separate Schools of Ontario

Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions

Education in the Primary and Junior Divisions

3. The following publications will be sent to candidates whose application forms are approved for their use in preparing for the examination. Most should be available in schools for the use of potential candidates who wish to undertake preliminary study.

SECTION A*

ACTS
- the Education Act
- the Teaching Profession Act
- the Ontario School Trustees' Council Act
- the School Boards and Teachers' Collective Negotiations Act

REGULATIONS

Regulation 262 - Elementary and Secondary Schools and Schools for Trainable Retarded Pupils - General

Regulation 269 - Ontario Teacher's Qualifications

*Only materials from Section A will be permitted in the examination room.

REGULATIONS

Regulation 271 - Pupil Records

Regulation 274 - Special Education Programs and Services

Regulation 276 - Supervisory Officers

Regulation 277 - Teachers' Contracts

Ontario Regulation 23/83
- Immunization of School Pupils

Ontario Regulation 554/81
- Education Identification, Placement & Review Committees and Appeals

Ontario Regulation 822/82
- School Year and School Holidays

Ontario Regulation 532/83
- Supervised Alternative Learning for Excused Pupils

Regulations General Legislative Grants, 1986

Regulation made under the Teaching Profession Act

OTHER

1986 Weighting Factor Information

SECTION B

Equality of Education Opportunity and Equalization of the Mill Rate Burden -- Provincial Grants to School Boards for 1986

4. Candidates are advised to include general academic and educational reading in their preparation. School administration, curriculum review, development, and implementation, and school organization are highly relevant topics. No extensive bibliography is offered here. Most schools and school boards house useful titles. Publications of the ministry such as the Fullan-Park document on curriculum implementation and publications that relate to the Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool are widely distributed and can be obtained from the Ontario Government Bookstore, 880 Bay Street, Toronto, M7A 1N8 (telephone: 965-2054).

5. Candidates may be interested in reading an article entitled, "Whither the Supervisory Officer's Certificate Examination?" in the fall 1986 edition of the Ontario Journal of Educational Administration, published by the Ontario Association of Education Administrative Officials (OAEAO). The article provides a history of the examination, examines a question from last year's examination and offers helpful hints as to how to prepare for the current examination.

   Inquiries about the Journal may be addressed to:

   Ontario Journal of Educational Administration
   Lambton County Board of Education
   Box 2019, 200 Wellington Street
   Sarnia, Ontario
   N7T 7L2

September 1986

SHELL/SOSTUDYLISTFORCANDIDATES

DRAFT

SUPERVISORY OFFICER'S CERTIFICATE AND BUSINESS SUPERVISORY OFFICER'S CERTIFICATE 1987 WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

1. Location of Examination:

The written portion of both the 1987 Supervisory Officer's Certificate Examination and the Business Supervisory Officer's Certificate Examination may be taken at the location you requested:

The Ontario Room
2nd Floor, Macdonald Block
Government of Ontario
900 Bay Street
TORONTO, Ontario

The examination will commence at 9:00 a.m. and terminate at 12:00 Noon on Thursday, January 15, 1987.

2. Calculators:

Pocket calculators may be brought into the examination room and may be used in responding to questions.

3. Format of questions:

The examination will be similar in format to the one in 1986. You should be prepared to respond to ESSAY, SHORT ANSWER, and OBJECTIVE type questions.

4. "Open-book" Examination:

As noted in Policy/Program Memorandum No. 35, October 10, 1986, the written portion will be a "limited open-book" examination. The following may clarify the limitations that are placed upon this type of examination.

- Only the documents distributed by the Ministry of Education to each candidate upon acceptance are permitted in the examination area. No additional materials of any kind may be brought into the room.

- The reference materials may be indexed with small tabs, highlighted and notes may be written on the margins and/or blank pages of the documents themselves.

- The document "Equality of Education opportunity and Equalization of the Mill Rate Burden -- Provincial Grants to School Boards for 1986" is not allowed in the examination room.

- Review the document, "Study Information for Candidates" to determine the titles of the publications that may be brought into the examination room.

- The Education Act may be inserted into a binder but no additional pages may be added.

- Candidates should note that the copies of Bill 30 and Bill 75 which were included in your package of materials are not on the list of approved materials that may be brought into the examination room. These two bills have been integrated into the September 1986 edition of the Education Act.

The intent of the above restrictions is to ensure that each candidate has an equal opportunity for success, while, at the same time, recognizing individual preferences for organization and reference.

5. Examination Results:

The results of the written examination will be sent by mail to the address on your application form. If you have had a change of address since you submitted your application, notify:

The Registrar Services Unit
Evaluation and Supervisory Services
Ministry of Education
18th Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
M7A 1L2
Telephone: 965-5831

Candidates should be informed of their examination results by Feb. 13, 1987.

6. Oral Examination:

Only candidates who are successful on the written examination will be permitted to take the oral examination. The oral examination will be held at the locations listed on your application form during the three days, March 24, 25 and 26, 1987. You will receive notice of the time and location of your oral examination if you are eligible.

7. Regulations - General Legislative Grants

Regulations and their amendments comprise the General Legislative Grants, 1986. You should add the numbers for each Regulation to your copy as follows:

GENERAL LEGISLATIVE GRANTS, 1986
PUBLIC, SEPARATE AND SECONDARY SCHOOL BOARDS
Made under the Education Act
O.Reg. 128/86

APPORTIONMENT 1986 REQUISITIONS
DIVISIONAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION
Made under the Education Act
O.Reg. 129/86

CALCULATION OF FEES FOR PUPILS
Made under the Education Act
O.Reg. 130/86

CALCULATION OF AVERAGE DAILY ENROLMENT
REGULATION 127/86
Made under the Education Act

Note the following corrections to Ontario Regulation 127/86, Calculation of Average Daily Enrolment:

- Section 2(a)(i) line 2 - substitute the word "January" for "February".
- Section 2(b)(i) line 2 remove phrase, "of the previous year"

8. Candidates qualified to write the 1987 examination under the requirements defined in Section 2 of Policy/Program Memorandum No. 35 of October 10, 1986, should take special note that if they are not successful on the 1987 examination their eligibility under the "grandfathering" section will lapse. Unsuccessful candidates will have to write subsequent examinations under the terms outlined in Section 1 of the above Policy/Program Memorandum. The requirements in Section 1 become the only qualifying route in subsequent years until the policy is amended.

9. A candidate who obtains a standing of at least 60% on each of the written and oral examinations will be awarded the certificate for which they made application.

December, 1986